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THE GAVEROCKS.

A TALE OF THE CORNISH COAST.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'JOHN HERRING,' 'MEHALAH,' ETC.

CHAPTER X.

A WOMAN'S SOUL.

'GERANS,' said the Squire, 'I'm sorry your mother takes on so about Con. I can't see the sense of it. When a thing has happened, and can't be undone, accept it. Why, the Camelford and Padstow Bank failed two years ago, and I had a score of their notes in my pocket-book. I did not spread the notes out before me, and weep over them till I had sopped them to pulp. No, I burnt them all and said no more on the matter. We can't fish Con up, and, if we did, what comfort would that be to a natural man? If your mother sticks in bed we shall have to get a house-keeper, or the maids will be up to jinks. That doctor comes here every day to see her, but I know better than he how to cure her. A stiff glass of rum and hot water, with a lemon slice floating on top and a dust of nutmeg, and sugar to taste. Lord! Gerans, there's nothing like it, whether you get the shivers, or a nip of rheumatism, or have a domestic affliction, or get bad notes, or begin to think about your soul. I was cut up, I can tell you, when I was at the Falcon Inn at Bude. I was very sorry for Con, but I took the stiffest glass I could brew, and I put a bit of cucumber in it, and that relieved me wonderfully. I tumbled into bed—no sheets—between blankets, and slept like a cat in the ashes. Your mother wants rousing. I believe it's nothing but bile. I'd

like to put her on horseback and send her after the hounds ; get her liver well shaken, and, bless my heart, she'd be as right as Greenwich time next day, and mope no more over Con. I don't suppose Rose's habit would fit her, and she couldn't go without one. What a pity it is that the gun went to the bottom with Con ! Capital gun that was ; I'm only thankful that I didn't lend Con mine, but made him take yours. Lord ! if it had been mine was drowned, I should have been angry. I know that gun, and it knows my hand on it, as well as Phœbus knows my touch on the reins. Gerans, what do you think of Rose, eh ?

'Rose !' echoed the young man, startled by the abrupt question. 'She is very nice.'

'Nice—that is cool praise. Say something warm.'

'Well, father, I think her very bright, cheerful, and pleasant in the house.'

'To be sure she is—full of fun, and no nonsense about her. Can't do without her now, can we ?'

'We shall have to some day, when she marries.'

'What ! take four hundred a year away ? Not so, my good boy. I had intended her for Con, as you get Towan, and there was no salt in the box for him, but, as Con has departed, she is at your disposal. Four hundred a year in house property at Truro. I'll tell you my plan, Gerans. We'll sell this property and buy Trevithick. That will be for sale before long, and it will fit on to this estate as one nutshell on to another, and as cream fits junket.'

'But, my dear father——'

'There are no buts in the case. Stay, I'll have in some brandy at once. Upon my word, I'm low this evening with the smell of medicine and the popping in and out of that doctor. We'll have a bowl of punch and discuss it and your marriage together. If you've objections we'll drown them ; scruples, grate them up into the nutmeg and give zest to the bowl. It is not against the law, she is not your brother's widow.'

'Con knew nothing of this, did he ?'

'No, how could he ? I had no time to arrange it with him.'

'Or Rose ?'

'No, I had not broached it to her.'

'But you are premature, father——'

'Premature ! What a word to stop my mouth with. I willed it, that is enough. If Con had lived, he should have had Rose

and her house property at Truro ; as he is dead, you shall have her and buy Trevithick. That is settled.'

'But Rose may object.'

'Golly ! I'd like to see her. She object to a strapping boy like you ? If I choose it—full stop—the thing is done.'

Gerans was so astonished that he could not speak. He sipped his glass and stared at his father.

'Now you know what suit to lead,' said old Hender Gaverock. 'Lead hearts and I'll trump. I suppose there must be a little sentiment and moonshine and treacle and nightingale's songs. Girls like that, but it is not business. It is like the borage floating on top of cyder cup ; it gives a sort of a poetical flavour, and it is an ornament, but in itself it is nothing. Give her the blossom, but you drink the cup.'

'I do not suppose Rose cares for me, and, as for myself——'

'You can't help liking her. Besides, what is the odds ? Women are women and gulls are gulls, they are all alike—one a little whiter and one a little noisier than another ; but if you must have a wife, I don't see—and I've lived long enough to know—that it matters very much whom you take. They are as much alike as herrings. Some have soft rows and some have hard, and some begin with very soft rows, which become gritty as gravel in old age. You might go to Land's End and Lizard and not fare better. That is settled. As soon as decency permits, after the loss of Con, you take Rose and her four hundred, and we'll manage Trevithick.'

Then Loveday Penhalligan came in. She had been with Mrs. Gaverock, but was relieved for the night by Rose Trehwella. The Squire and his son stood up on her entry.

'Come here, Miss Loveday,' said Hender Gaverock, 'we are discussing a bowl of rum-punch, and all it lacks to make it perfect is that you should put your lips to it. Come here !' he repeated in his dictatorial, domineering manner, 'I remember when in this very hall we drank the ladies' healths out of vessels five inches long by one inch deep, and they were made of satin—the ladies' own shoes.'

'My pattens are in the hall, Squire, you may try to drink my health out of them.'

'Bring them in, Gerans, and we'll fit finger glasses to the rings and play forfeits who spills a drop in draining the glass or breaks it.'

'No, Squire Gaverock, I will not lend my pattens for that; Mrs. Gaverock will hold me guilty of her broken bowls.'

'Take my chair, Miss Loveday,' said the old man, pointing to a leather-covered armchair, high-backed, by the fire.

'For a moment only,' answered the girl. She took the chair he had vacated for her, and laid her hands on the arms; the back of the chair and the protruding carved sides were above her head. She was framed in old stamped gilt leather, while the red firelight flickered over her pale face, dark hair, and large soft eyes.

'Now, Miss Penhalligan,' said the Squire, 'I am glad I have cornered you, for I want a word. You are spoiling Mrs. Gaverock. It is very kind of you to come, but don't condole with her—it makes her worse. She wants stirring up. I know women.'

'Pardon me, you do not.'

'I—I not know them!' laughed the old man. 'Golly! I have had sixty-five years' experience of them, and I ought to understand them.'

'No, you have spent sixty-five years in their society, and you understand them less now than you did sixty-five years ago. Then you might have learned, now you are past acquiring the knowledge.'

The old man stared at Loveday, amazed at her audacity.

'You think,' pursued the girl, 'that a woman's soul is to be tinkered with a slater's sax.¹ It is of too fine a nature to be touched even with the thumb. When a particle of dust enters your watch and stops the hands you hold your breath as you examine the works lest a breath should rust them. A woman's heart is more delicate in its mechanism than that, and a rough touch and a rude blast will spoil it for ever. You know our Cornish proverb, "the earth is strewn with potsherds." It means that everywhere, in every village, almost in every house, are broken lives, lives broken by rough usage and careless handling. You would have used the finger-glasses for a jest and a forfeit, and heeded nothing if they fell and were shattered. We poor women are like these same finger-glasses, full of fresh and pure water for you men to dip your soiled fingers into and cleanse them, not for you to convert into bumpers to break for a wager.'

'Golly!' exclaimed old Gaverock. 'I called you in here,

¹ The sax is the short chopper with a spike at the back for knocking the pin-holes in the slate. The word is the Saxon *seax*. It is in use in the West of England.

Miss, that I might have a word with you, and you are reading me a lecture. It will do you good, Gerans, I hope. I am past learning, as Miss Loveday has informed us.'

There was nothing offensive in her manner; she spoke gently, almost pleadingly, and she looked delicate and pretty in the high-backed chair with her elbows on the arms, and the white frills trembling as she moved her long fingers as though playing on a harpsichord, but really in nervous fear, on the rounded end of the chair-arm. As she spoke a light dew came out on her pure brow, and her long dark lashes were hung with molten frost drops.

'You must not be angry with me, Squire,' she said, looking timidly at him; 'if I am very bold with you it is my love for Mrs. Gaverock which makes me speak. Leave the dear old lady to Dennis and me, we will do our utmost for her, but you must not interfere and throw down the stones we set up.'

'And Rose—does she count for nothing?'

'No, I do not say that. Rose's part will come later. The sunshine will cherish and brighten when the broken flower is strong enough to bear the heat and light.'

'Very well. Have things purely your own way. It is no pleasure to me to go into a sick room. I'll keep away altogether.'

'Not that either,' said Loveday. 'Mrs. Gaverock will like to see you. She will expect you, and be pained if you do not visit her. When you go, be gentle, not boisterous, and not say much about Constantine. If you speak of him, speak tenderly.'

The old man rubbed his chin, then turned thoughtfully to Gerans.

'I understand her,' he said. 'Last time I went up clattering in my water boots; I'm to go in pumps, that is what she means.' He rubbed his chin again. 'I'll shave before I kiss her. I dare say I scratched her last time. But what a roundabout way of saying it!'

'Comfort must be applied to a dulled soul,' said Loveday, 'like gold leaf, that is so thin and tender that it may not be touched. I have seen a gilder blow the flickering sheet into the air and let it lightly, softly fall where it is to rest, and it has fallen over the whole surface, and hidden every blemish. But if you apply it with a finger you tear it, with a brush you crease it, and leave a crinkled, ragged surface full of rents and oozing size. Long experience is needed to lay the golden leaf; afterwards, another hand, less experienced, may burnish it.'

Then Loveday stood up.

'It is time for me to be at home,' she said. 'Dennis will be expecting his supper on his return from his round.'

'I will accompany you!' exclaimed Gerans, starting to his feet.

'I can return well by myself. There is no one and nothing I need fear.'

'Certainly not alone,' said Gerans, 'now that the night has fallen. You are so surpassing kind in coming here daily to see my dear mother, and I cannot suffer you to return unaccompanied.' He took his hat, helped her into her shawl, and gave her his arm.

When she was gone old Gaverock emptied his glass, kicked the logs together on the hearth, and growled: 'She is right so far, that I don't know women as they are in these days. Lord! the impudence to address me as she has. This is what comes of the French Revolution. We shall have Charlotte Cordays here next.'

The night was not dark, the plovers were still about, screaming, and from the cliffs could be heard the noise of the gulls. High overhead a flight of brent-geese went by, barking like aerial dogs.

'Loveday,' said Gerans, 'I have not seen you since I heard of the relationship in which we stand—that is, I have not seen you so as to speak to you in private. As you heard my father address you as Miss Penhalligan and Miss Loveday, you understand that he has not been made aware of that as yet. I have promised Dennis to tell my father, but I have not had a favourable opportunity for doing so.'

'I do not see occasion for it,' said Loveday. 'Let it be buried in the past.'

'Poor dear Con acted very wrongly by you. He ought to have been more considerate of——'

'Not a word against him!' interrupted the girl. 'As you have not told Mr. Gaverock, let the story remain untold. I ask nothing from him; I acted wrongly and I must bear the consequence. I shall always have your regard, I trust?'

'Always, always, dear Loveday!'

'That suffices. Mrs. Gaverock knows, and is happy in the knowledge. There is really no occasion why your father should be troubled by being told what has taken place. It is in the past. It can do no good to repeat it, and I know he would be very indignant if he heard it.'

'Well, sister, his anger would blow away in a week or two.'

'In that week he would say words which would hurt your mother and me where our hearts are most tender, and the wounds would not heal for years.'

'It is but right, Loveday, that your connection with the family should be known and acknowledged.'

'If it were, reflections would be made on poor Constantine for not having himself made it known and having exacted acknowledgment months ago.'

'That is true, but your honour is more to be considered than my brother's memory. I cannot in conscience submit.'

'You do not understand a woman's soul,' answered Loveday quietly. 'It is of that nature that it will endure anything rather than that the slightest injury should be done, even to the memory of the man she loves. But do not be troubled on that score. My secret is safe in the hands of yourself and your dear mother. In such good kind hands let it lie. Good-night, brother Gerans, I am at my gate. Think better of women and deal more tenderly with their fluttering hearts than does your father with his experience of sixty-five years.'

CHAPTER XI.

A STUDY IN DRAWING.

PRAXITELES is said to have sculptured an Eros which seemed to laugh, but which, when the eyes of the figure were bandaged, seemed to be grave, even stern. Rose Trewhella's eyes danced with the *ἀνήριθμον γέλασμα* of the sparkling summer sea, but there was sufficient decision in the lines of her mouth and in the moulding of her nostrils to show that there were the elements of a firm character in her, undeveloped—a potentiality and a promise. At present she was frivolous, careless, pleasure-loving, without a perception of the seriousness of life, without a thought of dangers that might menace her unless watched against, of pitfalls among which she might be drawn by her own thoughtlessness.

She had been spoiled as a young girl, and had grown to be wayward and exacting. Her father had been careless and good-natured. She had been petted by him, and flattered by his fox-hunting friends. She had associated very little with girls of her own age. Her governess had been ruled by her, she had fixed

her own hours of work and studies. Her education had, therefore, been desultory.

But there was good, sterling good, in the mine of her heart, overlaid with much worthless stuff. She had obtained whatsoever she wanted from her father by coaxing or by sulking; and she supposed that these two recipes were infallible, and would suffice her to get all she wanted out of other men.

When Gerans returned from Nantsillan, he found Rose in the hall with his father. She had left Mrs. Gaverock when the old lady went to sleep. The Squire liked Rose; she joked with him, teased him, showed him a certain amount of deference, and submitted to his authority. Rose sat in the chair recently vacated by Loveday, and presented the most marked contrast to her. Her hair was tossed into a tangle about her head, like floss silk; it was fair and golden, in it was a fine strip of white cambric, but whether tying the hair, or entangled in it, inextricably, could hardly be told. It was like a ribbon we sometimes see woven into a bird's nest among the twigs. Her cheeks were bright with colour, and her blue eyes sparkled with mischief.

Directly Gerans entered she attacked him.

'You have had a *very* pleasant walk in the twilight, Cousin, I am sure.'

'I have seen Miss Loveday home.'

'You need not tell me that. I got a glimpse of you starting arm in arm, and thought you made a pretty pair.'

Gerans coloured.

'It would have been unmannerly to have let her return to Nantsillan unescorted.'

'Gerans the gallant! Gerans the courtly! What it must be for a young damsel to have such a knight to attend her! You seemed to be in close conference. I suppose the subject was *most* interesting—to yourselves.'

Rose saw that Gerans was uncomfortable, and so she went on mischievously. She was not jealous of Loveday, but she liked tormenting Gerans, who was not agile of mind to evade or parry her thrusts.

'Now,' said she, going up to him, and looking slyly into his eyes, 'what was it all about? Tell me, if you can, the topic of your talk.'

Gerans was confused, and stammered an incoherent reply. Afterwards, when he was in bed, he thought, 'How stupid of me!

I should have answered that we were speaking of poor Con. But that is the way with me, I never hit on the right thing to say till it is too late to say it.'

The old father's suspicions were roused, and he looked at his son with mistrust. When Rose had left the room, he said roughly, 'Gerans, I will have no foolery with Miss Loveday. I have told you my mind. You know what is expected of you. As for Mistress Malapert, she is an impudent hussy, and I dislike her. Prodigiously daring to tell me that I know nothing of women! What is her age? Twenty-one, I suppose. Been a woman three years, only a girl before, and I have had sixty-five years of experience of the sex. What was that she said of a woman's soul? A fine piece of mechanism not to be breathed on. That is flam! It is like a peacock's tail. Whirr! spread to blaze and dazzle you with its glitter and colour and eyes, then draggled in the wet and mud, and dropping a dowdy feather in the dank grass. Pshaw! It is a thing of show. I not know women!

A woman, a dog, and a walnut tree,
The more you whip 'em, the better they be.

Mind you this, Gerans, I will not allow you to think of Loveday. As poor Con has gone to the bottom of the sea, you must take Rose. That is a settled matter. As for Mistress Loveday, God bless my soul! we should fight if she and I were in the house together a week. I cannot stand opposition, leastways from a woman.'

Next day Rose's mood was changed. She would not speak at early dinner, and went into the parlour to sit by herself, with her hands in her lap, looking out of the window. Gerans followed her.

She did not turn her head when he opened the door, nor when he came across the floor to her. He placed himself in the window with his back to the light, and looked at her. Her lips were pouting, and her brows contracted.

'Are you unwell, Rose?'

'Oh dear, no, Mr. Gerans Gaverock. But it does not matter, no one here cares how I am.'

'Why do you say that? You surely know how highly we all regard you.'

'You regard me so highly as the lark, that is so high that it is altogether lost to sight, Mister Gaverock.'

‘You used to call me Cousin Gerans.’

‘It was a mistake. You came to consider me as a cousin, one on whom the common courtesies of life, when expended, were wasted. Look on me rather as an acquaintance, and then I shall receive proper treatment.’

‘But what have we done to offend you?’

‘Oh, nothing,’ said Rose, rising and settling her skirts and sitting down again. ‘That creeper should be cut, it is trailing over the window.’

‘I will see to the creeper another time. Why are you cross with me?’

‘Cross! You are rude; a lady is never cross. But this is the way with you men, you charge us with having the vapours, and do not consider the occasion, which is to be found in yourselves.’

‘But what have I done to offend you?’

‘Nothing,’ answered Rose, looking him coldly in the face.

‘Then why are you so dissatisfied?’

‘I am not dissatisfied, because I have expected nothing. I am dissatisfied when taken to a wax-work, and see what poor figures are within the booth, different from the painted promise without, but I am not dissatisfied where nothing has been promised and nothing performed.’

Gerans was perplexed. He looked at her with puzzlement in his brain, and said, humbly, ‘I don’t know what you want; but I do know that we are all your dutiful servants waiting on your wishes.’

‘I have been wanting to wind a skein of wool for a week, and no one has offered me his hands on which to spread it.’

‘But, surely, Miss Rose, you had only to express the desire, and my father or I would have flown to offer you help.’

‘With the eagerness you flew yesterday to offer it to Loveday. I warrant me she had not to ask for your arm. You forestalled her wish, you pressed your arm on her. Was it not so?’ Gerans was confused. ‘Whereas poor I—I must wait a week, and ask outright for help, or a hand is not held out to me.’

‘Surely, Miss Rose, this is unreasonable——’

She interrupted him with an assumption of anger, and started back in her chair. ‘Unreasonable, am I, and cross-grained, crabbed, spiteful; what next? Really, Mr. Gerans Gaverock, the Master of Manners does not come round these parts, or I would pay to send you to be schooled by him.’

‘I did not know you wanted any wool winding, or I would have been proud and happy——’

‘You did not see that I was working a border of a running scroll for the drawing-room fire-mat. You did not give sufficient thought to consider that my little ball of red wool was drawing to an end. You have no eyes for my necessities. They are engrossed by Miss Penhalligan, I take it.’

Gerans coloured.

‘You deal very hardly with me,’ he said penitently. ‘I assure you I am not thinking of Miss Loveday in the way you suppose.’

Rose laughed merrily and mockingly. ‘Mr. Gerans, I do not want your assurances. I am too supremely indifferent to you to be made a confidant of your partialities.’

‘Where is the wool?’ asked Gerans desperately.

‘Here. Are you going to be polite?’

Gerans held out his hands.

When a young and pretty girl has got a man fast with a skein about his fingers, which she is winding in a ball, she has him completely in her power. He is conscious that he is in a position somewhat ludicrous and not manly. He has to raise one hand and depress the other in obedience to the beck of her finger. Whatever she may say he cannot escape. He is her captive for a quarter of an hour. The man may have splendid abilities, but he is unable to exercise them; his mind must follow the run of the thread forwards and backwards, and he cannot think of anything else. At the same time the girl is winding mechanically, and exercising all her wits to torment, or coquette with, the victim.

Gerans, honest-hearted, slow of thought, spent a very uncomfortable twenty minutes thus tied; he was in continual fear of entangling the threads. They did catch occasionally, and, when they caught, Rose was obliged to come close to him, make him hold up his hands, whilst her golden head turned and dipped about, very close to his, and her delicate fragrant hands passed in and out between his palms, turning the ball this way, then that—he could almost have thought she was purposely entangling the wool, had he possessed sufficient guile to suppose it.

When a young girl holds the ball, and a man has the skein, there is a link of connection established between them, a wire of communication is drawn from one battery to another. The days of which we write were not those of the electric telegraph; but a telegraph of some sort, conveying a series of messages, was

set up whenever a young lady asked a young gentleman to hold the wool for her while she unwound. A heart was at each end, a battery and a registering table together. What touches, what tremulous quivers, what strange little tweaks the ball-spinner is able to send along the thread to the hands of the skein-holder! It happens that the threads of the skein pass over the most sensitive portion of the hand, between the fore-finger and the thumb, and this registers all the little defiances, and trembling entreaties, and quivering appeals, and bold assaults of the ball-winder, and delivers them all, sealed from every eye, direct to the heart of the skein-holder, who cannot refuse them, so engrossed is his mind on the vibration of the thread over his hands.

When at length the end of the wool was drawn slowly, almost reluctantly, off his left hand, and he recovered the possession first of the right, then of the left, Gerans was in a bewildered condition, not very sure that he retained possession of his heart—whether that had not also been wound away at the tail of the worsted and secured by Miss Rose.

‘Thank you so *very* much, Cousin Gerans,’ said she, raising her blue eyes and looking at him with an appeal for mercy in them. ‘I am sure I have been most exacting.’

‘Not at all. I like it.’

‘Do you now?’ A gush of twinkle came into her eyes, and dimples formed at the corners of her mouth. ‘You like being made to take the place of the backs of chairs. How good of you to say so, but you do not mean it?’

‘I am always ready to do anything for you, Rose.’

‘Then you will not be cross with me any more?’

‘I cross!’ He was justly astonished.

‘I suppose that no one knows his own faults; certainly no man will confess his—leastways to a woman. Yet, you have been very cross and peevish with me. I could scarcely bear it.’ Her voice shook, as the thread had shaken in her fingers lately.

‘You have been very much mistaken, Rose.’

‘No, I have not. Trust a girl to read the moods of those she is with. She opens in the sun, and shivers and droops when there are clouds in the sky.’

‘I was unaware of it. I am sure you misunderstood; I could not be cross with you.’

‘You want some one always at your side to tell you of your faults, and bid you correct your blunders.’

'Oh, Rose! if you will execute that office for me, it will be a delight to me to mend my ways.'

'You would not believe me when I told you you were erring.'

'I would believe anything from those lips.'

'Then you would have your faith sorely tried,' said Rose with a laugh, 'for I say one thing this moment and another thing that. Hark! Mr. Gerans Gaverock, there comes Dennis down from your mother's room.'

'Dennis!'

'You did not hear him go up, you were so engrossed in the skein. I did; and now he returns. I must positively see him!' Then she ran into the hall, and was followed by Gerans with heightened colour.

'How do you do?' said the girl, stepping up to the doctor. 'How is Mrs. Gaverock? Why has not Loveday been up to-day? Is it the drizzle that detains her? What a day it is!—rain squeezed through a hair-sieve, neither falling nor rising nor driving, but floating in the air.'

'I have found my patient slowly mending,' said Penhalligan. 'She must have the same treatment—must be kept very quiet.'

'And Loveday? Is she coming here?'

'Not to-day. She is not very well, and there is no necessity.'

'Then I will go to her. Mr. Penhalligan, will you hold an umbrella over me? I have found this day more dull in the house than it can possibly be outside, and so I will venture forth. Mr. Gerans has informed me that I have the vapours. I will take my vapours out into the general fog. May I ask you, Mr. Penhalligan, to wrap that cloak round me? I am clumsy with my overshoes: is it asking too much of you to desire that you would put your hand to help to slip them over my shoes? Thank you; you are very kind. I dare say I shall not find it *quite* as dismal when I am out of Towan as the day has seemed to me looking forth from the windows. You will lend me your arm, and be careful that the drip of the umbrella does not go down my back—will you not, Mr. Penhalligan?'

When they were gone, Gerans took up the bellows and began to blow the log that was smouldering on the dogs in the fire-place.

'Well, Gerans,' said his father, 'how are you getting on?'

'Middling,' answered the young man. 'The log is green, and will not blaze.'

Old Gaverock snatched the bellows from his hand, and sent puffs from the nozzle on his son.

'Oh, you green stock!' he shouted. 'It is you that do not kindle. When I was a young man it was quite other. You are slow and sleepy, without spark and crackle. What do you mean by allowing Penhalligan to carry your mistress off to Nantsillan? You be on the alert, or he'll take her away altogether—and then we shall lose Trevithick. Gerans, I went all over Trevithick yesterday, and I'll take you there to-morrow. We must have it. It comes alongside of Dinnabol Farm, as if made to run with it. At Dinnabol the sheep get the rot because of the wet clay; let them have the healthy moor of Trevithick to run on, and you can fatten at Dinnabol. In the autumn the mischief is down in the clay-lands, and at Dinnabol we have no sound runs for the sheep. Gerans, we must and we shall have Trevithick.'

'I don't suppose Rose cares for me,' said Gerans in a depressed mood, which showed itself by his tone of voice. 'If she had any regard for me, she would not tease me so cruelly.'

'You are a fool, Gerans. I know she likes you.'

The young man shook his head; he was very red in the face, annoyed with Rose, angry with Penhalligan.

'I tell you she does,' pursued his father. 'That Mistress Malapert dared to say I knew nothing of women—I with my sixty-five years' experience. I can see through Rose as if she were a tumbler of water dipped out of the Atlantic. She is drawing you, Gerans. I know it *because* she teases you.' The old man began to sing—

Phyllis is my only joy,
Sometimes forward, sometimes coy.

'She was kind to Dennis Penhalligan and cruel to me,' said Gerans.

'My good fool!' exclaimed the old man, 'that is all part of her play. Run after her. You are not going to let that Doctor Sawbones walk with her to Nantsillan and walk back with her as well?'

'She might not like my pursuing her.'

'Nonsense! she wants you to run after her. Go.'

He forced his son out of the house, then he reseated himself in his armchair, and burst out laughing. 'And so Mistress Malapert said I did not know women!'

CHAPTER XII.

NANTSILLAN.

ROSE TREWHELLA had hardly got out of sight of Towan before she let go her hold of Dennis's arm, and said, 'Mr. Penhalligan, I do not think that the umbrella is of the slightest use against the mist. Moreover, there are so many puddles which I must skip over or circumvent that I can do better for myself if I walk unassisted. How long have you known my cousin Gerans? Have you been friends from boyhood? You know he is not really my cousin; indeed, we are no relation whatever, but it would sound too unfriendly to call him Mr. Gerans, and too familiar to call him Gerans, so I split the difference and designate him Cousin. I think him very nice, do not you?'

'Whoever commends himself to you needs no praise from me,' answered Dennis.

'Now, Mr. Penhalligan, this is one of your stiff, set phrases, fine-sounding and evasive. I want your *real* opinion of him.'

'I think that he is truthful, sincere, and kind-hearted.'

'I am glad you think that. But he is stupid and slow; you will allow that?'

'He will mend in time.'

'When?'

'When weaned.'

Rose looked round and laughed. 'What do you mean?'

'At present he thinks, sees, hears, smells through his father's organs, and acts as his members. When the old Squire dies—or when Gerans marries, he will cut his teeth. He has not his brother's quickness, but such docility and honouring of a father must deserve him length of days in the land—denied to the less submissive younger brother.'

Rose bit her lip, and looked out of the corners of her eyes at Penhalligan. He was walking with his head down; his dark face was wet with the fog, his lips were set, and his brow was gloomy.

'I am sorry for Loveday,' said Rose. 'What is the matter with her?'

He moved his shoulders uneasily. 'Nothing to signify. She cannot go every day to Towan. There are home duties. We do not keep a servant. This is our washing day.' He coloured as he spoke.

'Why did you not say so, instead of pretending she was ill? I shall be in the way. I shall go back.' She stood still.

'No, no, Miss Trehwella,' he begged; 'do not return. Pray come on. Loveday will be so delighted to see you—so honoured by your crossing our mean threshold.'

'Why did you say she was ill when she was not?'

'Because,' he answered, 'I am a moral coward, and I was ashamed to admit that she had the scrubbing and the ironing to do. Poverty is dishonour.'

'Not at all; poverty is honourable.'

'Then why are we ashamed to confess it?'

'We are ashamed to be thought religious and temperate and thrifty; and out of the same perversity we are ashamed to be thought poor. How long have you known Gerans?'

'For five or six years—ever since I have been here.'

'Which did you like best—Gerans or his brother who is dead, Constantine?'

'I preferred the society of the younger. He often came to us. He was musical, so am I, and I have a pianoforte that belonged to my mother.'

'You play! How clever you are!'

'A surgeon need be nimble of fingers; and practice on the keys is good schooling for delicacy of touch on the human nerves. Here we are at my cottage.'

'You are sure I shall not be in the way? I will just speak to Loveday and run away.'

'I will accompany you home if you must return.'

'Not so. I can go back to Towan by myself. But perhaps Gerans will come to fetch me. I am teaching him to be polite to ladies.'

So she went in.

The cottage was small; it consisted of a reception room or hall, small, floored with slate, and low. Also of a tiny parlour at the side, and a surgery. The parlour was unfurnished, and was used as a work-room. The brother and sister sat in the hall. This room had whitewashed walls; against them were hung the surgeon's diploma, a sampler worked by Loveday's mother when a girl, giving the letters of the alphabet, the numerals, a tree, a flower, and a bird all of the same size.

On the chimney-piece were two good old china vases, relics of better days, and against the wall away from the door was a piano,

another relic of a time when the Penhalligans were better off. Before the hearth was a rug made of scraps of cloth woven into a piece of canvas, warm, but plain. Muslin curtains hung over the window. Everything in the room and about the house was very plain, but clean and in excellent order. The garden beds within the wicket gate were carefully attended to and free from weeds. The flowers in them were common, but bloomed freely, in gratitude for the care shown them. Against the walls of the house were a jessamine and a monthly rose that was a free bloomer. In the hall, although everything was plain, yet an air of snugness and of beauty was afforded by the abundance of flowers and leaves wherewith it was adorned. In saucers were blackberry leaves of every shade between lemon yellow and carmine, beech leaves of warm copper hue, pink dog-weed leaves, and the transparent crimson berries of the wild guelder rose, pale blue Michaelmas daisies, clusters of rose-hips, feathery traveller's joy, sprigs of crane's-bill still flowering, blue borage, graceful rainbow-coloured carrot leaves, delicate white-veined arrow-headed blades of ivy, beautiful grasses—the table, the chimney-piece, the window, the whatnot, were adorned with posies, each of which was a study in colours, all picked, sorted, settled in their glasses by the skilful fingers of Loveday. Bare of furniture, lacking in ornament the room might be, but it was scrupulously clean, and brightened by these charming clusters of autumn leaves and flowers.

Rose had no time to look round before Loveday herself came to her from the parlour, with colour glowing through the olive skin of her cheeks, and her dark eyes shining with love and pleasure. She held out both her hands to Rose, and Rose saw that they were crinkled with immersion in hot water. Loveday wore a thin cotton gown, and had arms bare from the elbow, very white, streaked with pretty blue veins.

Rose caught Loveday almost boisterously in her arms, and kissed her on both cheeks and on her lips.

‘That designing brother of yours pretended you were seriously ill, and brought me here to nurse you. In reality he desired the pleasure of my society; he was tired of the dull walk alone in the mist. Now you are busy, and I suppose I shall be in the way. Yet I must detain you from your work for three minutes. Oh! it is insufferable in Towan. Guardie says to his son, “Gerans, good boy, trot into the parlour and talk to Rose,” and in the tame fellow trots. Presently the old gentleman puts in his head

at the door and says, "Gerans, good boy, that will do, come here!" Then the tame fellow goes pit-a-pat back to his place at the old man's heel. Next the Squire says, "Curl yourself up in a corner by the fire, and I give you leave to snore." Then the docile creature curls up and snores. Presently the father takes the bread and cuts it up, and says, "Gerans, sit up pretty and beg," so up he sits on his hind feet and holds his front pats before him—so!' She imitated a dog begging. "'Snap!' says Mr. Gaverock, and snap goes Gerans. Is it not so, Mr. Penhalligan?" asked Rose, turning sharply round and confronting Dennis.

Loveday took Rose by the hand, and drew her into the parlour and shut the door.

'Do not say these sharp things, dear,' she said in a gentle tone. 'Gerans is very good. Look for the excellencies in people, not for their weaknesses, and you will be the happier.'

'I have not spoken half as sharply as your brother,' said Rose, in self-defence. 'I give Gerans credit for being a well-trained poodle; Mr. Penhalligan said he was an unweaned baby.'

'I am sorry Dennis said that; it is not true.'

'Of course you take up the cudgels for Gerans Gaverock.' Rose pouted as she spoke. 'He is so civil to you, and forestalls all your wishes.'

Loveday's clear frank eyes rested on the twinkling blue eyes of Rose, and the latter fell before the steady gaze. 'Dear Rose,' said Loveday, 'Gerans is nothing more to me, can be nothing more to me, than a kind and trusted—almost brother. I shall, I can, think of him in no other light, so give way to no romantic fancies. Gerans is honourable, straightforward, and simple-hearted. We have all our weaknesses, you as well as he—I most of all. Two men look on the same face and draw it; the one makes a beautiful portrait, the other a caricature. The one leaves out of sight all that is gross, and sordid, and common in the face, he paints the soul—as it might and may be—shining through the features as through a figured globe. The other knows nothing of soul, sees no ideal, believes in none. He grasps everything that is ridiculous, mean, and transitory in the face, and delineates that. You must look at mankind either as the painter or the caricaturist. It is best for us to take the higher platform.' After a short pause: 'Will you help me, dear Rose?'

Rose looked round the parlour; it was wholly unfurnished. The Penhalligans used only the hall. One room sufficed them, and

Loveday did her ironing in the parlour. The long deal table was covered with linen, a fire was in the grate, and irons stood around it becoming heated.

'Rose, I am ironing my brother's collars and shirt-fronts. Will you goffer these frills for me?'

'My dear Loveday!' exclaimed Rose, 'I wish with all my heart I could; but I never did anything useful in all my life, except wool-work.'

'And that is very useful. I wish I had time to do some.'

Rose's heart fluttered and her eyes danced. 'Loveday, you darling! Will you? Oh, don't say me nay!'

'How can I till I know what you want?' said the other, laughing.

'I have begun a mat—that is, the border for a mat to go before the fire. It is very pretty; the ground olive green with a broad scroll over it of folded ribbon, shaded from red to white. I began it three years ago, and I do a little from time to time. Now I will attack it like a dragon if you will accept it from me and use it for your parlour mat when you fit up this room. Why have you not furnished it?'

'We are waiting for our ship to come in,' answered Loveday, 'and Nantsillan Cove is so dangerous with reefs that our ship has not yet ventured in.'

'But,' began Rose, looking round her with wonder, 'why does not your servant do this?'

'Because our servant is a little girl of twelve, and she would probably spoil the things.'

'Does she cook your dinners and make the bread?'

'No; I am cook and baker.'

'She cleans the rooms and makes the beds?'

'No; I am housemaid.'

'And the garden? Who attends to that?'

'I am gardener.'

'But Mr. Penhalligan's horse? Surely you are not groom also?'

'No, that I am not; my brother is his own groom.'

'This is very strange to me. And your dresses? And the linen? Are you also dressmaker and scouring maid?'

'Yes, I am.'

'Then,' said Rose, 'I am a very useless creature in the world.'

I cannot understand you. You work like a common woman, and yet you look always like a lady.'

'Am I not a lady?' asked Loveday, with a quiet smile.

Rose in reply threw her arms round her and kissed her again.

'How good!—how very good you are!' she said with a gush of love and enthusiasm. 'I wish—Oh! I wish I were like you!'

Loveday shook her head and went on with the ironing whilst she talked, glad, perhaps, to be able to hide her face by bending over her work.

'No, dear, I am not good. I have committed grave faults; I have done things both foolish and wrong, for which I shall grieve all my days, the shadow of which will always hang over me. I have had more experience of life than you, that is all, and I am oldened by it beyond my years.'

'There is Gerans!' interrupted Rose, starting, as she saw his head pass the window. 'I thought he would come. I suppose his father has sent him. I will charge him with it.'

'Prithee do not,' entreated Loveday, laying aside her work and going up to her. 'You will wound him—that will be the result; and is that a result to be desired?'

'He should come unprompted.'

'Perhaps he has; possibly not. Does it matter? He wanted to leave, and Mr. Gaverock suggested that he should. Two hearts felt kindly towards you instead of one. You should be pleased to have it so. Now, one word with you before we go into the next room to them.' Loveday's face became distressed, and her hand clasped Rose's arm nervously. 'Do not play tricks with my brother. I know you mean no harm, but Dennis is unable to bear trifling. He takes everything seriously, too seriously. You remember the fable of the frogs and the boys who threw stones at them. "What is fun to you," said the frogs, "is death to us."'

Rose's tell-tale mouth twitched, the lips pouted, but the corners went down; she was half disposed to defiance, half to cry.

'We will detain both you and Mr. Gerans,' said Loveday, 'and have tea; then Dennis and I will do our best to amuse you with music.'

'Oh, that will be prime!' exclaimed Rose, laughing. 'But how about the ironing? Is Mr. Penhalligan to go limp-collared to-morrow because we are here?'

'Leave that to me. We shall have a pleasant evening.'

CHAPTER XIII.

A QUIET EVENING.

LOVEDAY went out of the parlour at once to meet and welcome Gerans, and invite him in to a dish of tea. 'You will excuse me,' she said smiling, 'if I run away for a few minutes and put off my work-a-day for my holiday gown. It is a holiday indeed for us to entertain friends. Dennis, make up the fire and draw the curtains. Mr. Gerans, there is one corner of the hearth for you, and there is a corner also for Rose, and to her I entrust the bellows.'

Gerans winced at the reference to the bellows, and looked at Loveday. But he remembered that she could not have heard his father's remark, and his colour, which had flashed to his temples, disappeared again.

The little maid of twelve appeared, and laid the cloth, standing on tiptoe and stretching over the table to smooth out the creases. By the time it was laid evenly, Loveday reappeared in a cloth gown, and helped the child to arrange the table. A pretty Derby tea service appeared, inherited by Loveday from her mother, a rabbit pie, cold, and preserves of whortleberry, and blackberry, and strawberry, of her own making. Then ensued a pause of a quarter of an hour, during which the little maid ran to the nearest farm for cream and butter.

Presently the tea-kettle came in, and was given a final heating on the hall fire, to ensure that the water was really on the boil when poured upon the Chinese leaves. The curtains were drawn, the candles lighted, a faggot of dry wood thrown on the fire, and the little party drew to the table.

Then Rose uttered an exclamation of delight. On her plate lay a little bunch of purple violets. 'Oh, Loveday! how sweet the flowers are! and how sweet of you to give me them!'

'Our violets bloom here all the year round, the glen is so warm and loose (sheltered).

'Like the pretty thoughts and fragrant virtues of your dear heart,' said Rose eagerly.

'The violets of Nantsillan will not compare with the rose of Towan,' said Dennis Penhalligan.

Rose tossed her head impatiently. 'Spare me your formal

compliments,' she said; 'mine was a pretty speech that sprang spontaneous from my heart, and yours is laboured and artificial.'

Rose was, at first, less exuberant in her spirits than usual. What Loveday had said to her in the parlour affected her, but only for a while. She was too buoyant to be long depressed, and by the time tea was over she had regained complete elasticity.

Dennis shook off some of his gloom, and endeavoured to be cheerful. He was very pleased to have Rose at his table, yet at the same time he was ashamed of the bareness of his room, its white walls, its common furniture. He could never dispel the sense of his poverty. He was proud, perhaps vain, not of his appearance, but of his abilities, and the sense of his being unworthily placed and hardly treated never left him. He was ashamed of his table, because the cloth was coarse, of the forks because they were of steel with black handles, of the preserves because they were of ordinary wild fruit. His heart was so cankered with discontent, that he could not see and rejoice over the comforts and cleanliness that were his, provided by the care of his sister. He never saw what advantages he had, but he was keen-sighted over the deficiencies. There is no more dangerous mood than one that is dissatisfied, none more tormenting than that which is unthankful. Loveday had a daily struggle with him to bring him to a better mind, but was unsuccessful.

'Dennis,' she said to him, 'the world is a mirror which reflects our humours—laugh to it, and it laughs back to you; scowl at it, and it returns your defiance. It will answer you as you address it, like an echo, just a note lower.'

Dennis asked Rose during tea if she were fond of music.

'Music!' she answered, clapping her hands. 'Oh, I love it! I love nothing better.'

His dark face lightened as she said this. They had a passion in common.

'Then,' said he, 'I will play you a sonata of Beethoven's; that in C flat, Opus 3. It is my favourite; of others, I have to ask what they mean, but this one tells its own tale. I can play this better than another, not because I have practised it oftener, but because I can speak it through my fingers. Every note expresses a thought of my heart. As I interpret this sonata, it is the utterance of titanic defiance by one wounded in spirit; like a tamed eagle that longs to soar, but cannot, it beats its wings in frenzy and scorn, and gnaws its own heart out, because condemned

to lie on earth when its proper sphere is above the clouds. It feels itself cast down and banned by a dark and inexorable power above which denies it light and air. In the *maestoso* you hear the agony of the soul ; in the *allegro*, its defiance. There is a battle in which the restive spirit submits, and then revolts, cries out in fury against the iron fate which holds it down, and then throws itself sullenly with face to earth, in sob and moan. Here and there bright and melodious passages flash, like summer lightning, or pass as fragrant airs, but they do not lessen the darkness nor alleviate the pain.'

'Do you mean to tell me, Mr. Penhalligan, that all this is contained in a few pages of music?'

'You shall judge for yourself. You have heard my "Argument," now listen to the canto.'

He seated himself at the piano, and began to play. In a moment his soul was caught by the music, and he was carried away from his surroundings, as Elijah was caught and borne upwards in the chariot of fire. After a while, as he was playing, as perhaps he had never played before, his nerves excited by the presence of Rose, he became dimly conscious of something indistinct and irritating, a something that drew him down from his heights, and brought him into the vulgar presence of unworthy surroundings. By degrees he became aware what it was that marred his pleasure—it was a conversation carried on in a low tone in the room. He thought at first that the tiresome little maid was clearing away the tea things, and asking her mistress instructions ; but when he paused to turn a leaf he heard Rose asking Gerans, 'But, really, cousin, what is a Goose Fair?'

He tried to play on, but his interest in the music was gone. Loveday had watched his face, had seen his emotions throughout the performance quiver in his face, and now she read in it disappointment and anger. She went close to his side and said, 'Dennis, this is *caviar* to her ; play something lighter, the dance music in Lord Westmoreland's "Bajazet."'

Without answering, he allowed his fingers rapidly to glide into the frivolous, worthless music of the noble *dilettante*.

The talking ceased at once, and Rose's little feet beat the dance time on the slate floor.

Presently Dennis ceased. Then Rose clapped her hands. 'Thank you so much, Mr. Penhalligan. I have enjoyed myself greatly. But really, I did not think Beethoven could have written

anything as fine. All the first part struck me as poor stuff, but the *scherzo* at the end was delicious.'

'Come round the fire,' said Loveday quickly, stepping between her brother and Rose, to hide from her the expression of distress and disgust that passed over his face. I have got a lap-full of chestnuts from our own tree. We must toast them in the embers; and little Ruth will bring in glasses. You must taste my metheglin brewed from our own hives, and spicy with thyme from Towan Down.'

'Penhalligan,' said Gerans, 'are you going to the Goose Fair at Camelford?'

Dennis shook his head. 'Why should I go?'

'Loveday might like to be there, and eat Michaelmas goose.'

'Loveday is quite content to be at home,' said Miss Penhalligan.

'You must come, Dennis, and you also, Miss Penhalligan. The Goose Fair is an institution. My father goes, of course. We pick up my aunt and uncle Loveys on the way. It is settled that Rose is to go. I insist on your being my guests. Do not refuse me. Let me count—that makes seven. It takes four to a goose. We will have two. I dare say Anthony Loveys will come with his father and mother to make the eighth.'

Penhalligan looked at his sister doubtfully. Gerans went on: 'A moonlight night to drive home in over the moors. The Squire and the Loveyses can go in the chaise, and you and I, Dennis, and the young ladies in the gigs. There are our trap and yours available. If you will drive Loveday, I will drive Rose.'

'I shall not be able to go, I fear,' said Penhalligan, with darkening brow and quivering lip.

'Cousin Gerans,' exclaimed Rose, 'I should have supposed that it lay with the ladies to choose their partners.'

'By all means,' answered Gerans; 'express your wishes, and they shall be obeyed.'

'Then I think you shall drive Loveday one way, and me the other way. I shall have the pleasure of listening to Mr. Penhalligan's compliments on one of the journeys, and to endure your uncouthness on the other. Which it is to be must be decided by lot. Here, Mr. Gerans, are my hands. One contains a violet, and the other nothing. Choose which you will have for the drive to Wadebridge. If you pick the violet you have Loveday, if you choose the other hand you elect simply me.'

'I take your left,' said Gerans. She opened the hand and showed the rosy palm.

'There, Mr. Penhalligan, yours is the honour and pleasure of driving me home by moonlight over the downs to Towan, after the Goose Fair. Will not that induce you to sacrifice your patients for a day?'

CHAPTER XIV.

THE GOOSE FAIR.

THE Goose Fair in the West of England is not a fair at which geese are sold, but is one at which geese are eaten. It takes place about Michaelmas—Old Michaelmas—and then all the country round the town at which it is held makes holiday. The labourers cast aside their flails and picks, and put on their best clothes; the serving-maids beg a holiday with glowing cheeks and tears of entreaty; the farmers and their wives, and sons and daughters, and, till not many years ago, the gentry and the parsons, rode or drove to the market town with eagerness to eat goose. Geese ran over their commons in every village, and drank out of their ponds in every farm, and everywhere were eaten at home; nevertheless, a home-fed, home-roasted, home served-up goose was by universal consent a base and insipid dish when compared with Old Michaelmas goose ate in common in the market-town on Goose Fair Day. Better eat no mince pies at Christmas than omit to eat roast goose at Old Michaelmas Fair. Goose then meant plenty throughout the ensuing twelvemonth. The way in which this is expressed in the West Country vernacular is more precise than elegant. To write it would make the page blush the colour of the 'Globe.' Suffice it to say that he who eats roast goose on Goose Fair is sure not to have an empty stomach till next Michaelmas.

The Squire was a great stickler for old customs. Every year he drove to Wadebridge and picked up his married sister Barbara, and her husband Anthony Loveys, on the way, and carried them with him to the 'Lion's Head' at Wadebridge, where they dined together—of course—on goose! When his own sons were old enough, and when young Anthony Loveys, his nephew, was of sufficient age to dine abroad, they were included in the party.

Mr. and Mrs. Gaverock and Mr. and Mrs. Loveys sat down to one goose at a table by themselves; and Gerans, Constantine, and Anthony, junior, sat down to a second goose at another table by themselves; and being young, hearty, and hungry, the three managed to demolish a goose between them, though, according to orthodox custom, it takes four to eat a goose.

On the fair day a smoke redolent of goose hung over the little town of Wadebridge. The atmosphere in every house was impregnated with it from cellar to attic. The inn kitchens were unable to cook all the birds required, and all the house kitchens in proximity to each inn lent themselves to be utilised for the occasion. The inns had not sitting-rooms to contain the guests, and beds were pulled to pieces and stacked in the garrets, and washstands piled one on another, that sleeping apartments might for the nonce be converted into eating-rooms. The gardens around Wadebridge had their sage reaped down, and their onions torn up and wheelbarrowed into the town days before, to stuff the geese that were to stuff the eaters at the fair. Feathers which had been a shilling a pound all the rest of the year dropped, as suddenly as the mercury before a cyclone, to ninepence. Children turned up their noses at butter, and enriched their bread with yellow goose fat. Dogs, cats, despised mutton and beef bones through the whole month of October, they were given such a surfeit of goose skeletons.

To ensure that every goose was well done, it was boiled the day before, and then roasted on the day of the fair; and goose broth—the water in which the geese had been boiled—was to be had for the asking by all the beggars, and poor, and sick in and round Wadebridge, but was despised and scouted by them; and so poured away on the pigs by those who kept pigs, and down the gutters by those who had none.

When the fair was over, and the town relapsed into its normal stillness, and the smoke of the fires and the fumes of the roast birds lifted and were wafted away, then the Wadebridgians settled down to pies of gizzard and feet, and hashes of neck and ‘doctor’s nose’ which lasted a week, and soup of giblet and relics of stuffing becoming weaker and less savoury day after day.

The reader may suppose that we are about to describe to him the dinners themselves on Old Michaelmas Day to revive in him the savoury recollections of many a sage-and-oniony and unctuous moment in his past: spots in life’s pilgrimage on which it is a

pleasure to look back, moments which were greasy but guileless. We are not going to do so.

At one table sat Squire Gaverock with his sister and brother-in-law and young Anthony; at the other the two young ladies with Gerans and Dennis. Old Gaverock carved his goose with experience, and helped himself to the flap of fat skin that covered the stuffing. Gerans squirted the gravy over the table, and in the faces of his companions, in his clumsy attempts to find the joints of the wings and legs. The old people had done their first helping before the young had begun their hacked and shapeless morsels. But time was made, like geese, to be killed. The afternoon was before them in which, after a protracted, merry meal, to stroll about the town and look at the shows and shops.

Young Anthony Loveys was a tall, heavy young man, into whose constitution goose seemed to have largely entered. He spoke very little, ate hungrily, was blank in face, red complexioned and puffy, with a shining skin. He could ride, and liked dogs; he drank readily with his father and uncle, but never became uproarious. By age he belonged to the younger party, but that party was not sorry to be without him at their table, where he would have contributed nothing to their entertainment.

To the goose succeeded apple tart with clotted cream; then cheese and celery, and a bottle of port. After that, the young people were at liberty to leave the table; but their elders, and the heavy Anthony junior, remained at theirs talking, arguing, eating apples, and drinking more wine. Mrs. Loveys, indeed, protested that she had shopping to do in the town, and during her absence a neighbour, also dining that day on goose at the 'Lion's Head,' took her place.

The morning had been bright and sunny, with a pleasant air from the sea. When the diners turned out into the street and square, they saw that a change in the weather had taken place. The wind had veered round to the north-east, had risen, and was bitterly cold. Heavy clouds were massed on the horizon and were rolling over and obscuring the sky. Some persons in the market-place said they had heard thunder; others said they had seen lightning, but had heard no thunder.

The delay in getting dinner, the insufficiency of waiters, and the general reluctance to break up from table, had brought the afternoon to half-past three before the inn was left for the sight-seeing and shopping. The fairing was done with shivers. The owners

of stalls were withdrawing their wares under cover ; darkness was settling prematurely over the town. Hark ! A distant moan and then roar. In another minute down came snow in a blinding shower, whirled over Wadebridge and the valley of the Camel by a furious icy gale.

‘Come here! Come in here!’ exclaimed Dennis Penhalligan, drawing the ladies into a booth out of the snow and wind. The booth was a hut of rough boards.

‘Please to enter and take shelter,’ said a voice from within: and a pedlar stood forward bowing and inviting. ‘I have wares—pretty wares,’ he said. ‘Wares for the ladies, and wares for the gentlemen ; and spirits—best spirits from over the sea.’

He raised a heavy curtain that covered the door and dropped it behind the party. They found themselves in a sort of store, where all kinds of goods were exposed for sale. A few tallow candles were alight, burning dimly, as the wicks were long. No daylight entered this strange booth except through the doorway, and through that only when the curtain was drawn. The smell within was close, faint, and musty.

‘What have you got here for sale?’ asked Gerans, carelessly looking about him.

‘Everything, everything, very good, very strong, very pretty,’ answered the pedlar. The ladies examined the wares. Everything was stained with sea water, rusty, dropping to pieces.

‘Why,’ said Gerans, ‘this is like the hold of a wrecked vessel. Nothing in it is sound.’

‘Therefore all bargains, everything cheap,’ said the pedlar.

‘The cheapest goods are dear that are worthless,’ mocked Dennis Penhalligan. ‘This is all rubbish scraped together from the bottom of the sea or washed up from wrecks.’

Loveday looked at her brother reproachfully ; she felt for the pedlar whose wares were thus disparaged.

‘At all events we are given shelter from the storm,’ she said gently.

Dennis was excited and irritable. The wine he had drunk had heated his brain without warming his heart. He was jealous of Gerans’s attentions to Rose, which were marked, and he resented being behoven to his rival for the feast. He was angry with himself for having accepted the invitation, and he was angry with Gerans for having invited him. When he detected Gerans saying something to Rose which made her laugh, he suspected that the

joke was about himself, his poverty, his want of professional success, his ill-humour. The dark veins in his brow swelled, and his lips quivered so that he was forced to bite them to disguise his agitation. He could not quarrel with Gerans over the cups for which the latter had paid, but he would be glad of an occasion for a quarrel elsewhere than at the table where Gerans was host. The observant eye of Loveday was on him. He felt it, and resented that also. He knew that she read his heart, and he was angry with her—his best friend—for doing so. He would have hidden his ill-humour, his envy, his hate, but he could not do so.

‘If the ladies like,’ said the pedlar, ‘I have coffee.’

‘Mouldy?’ asked Dennis contemptuously.

‘The young ladies can taste,’ answered the pedlar obsequiously.

‘If they will condescend to sit, I will prepare them some cups.’

‘No coffee for me,’ said Dennis, roughly; ‘if you have anything in that way, give me brandy.’

Loveday put her hand on her brother’s arm, but he shook it impatiently off. She tried to catch his eye, but he averted his persistently, and frowned, that she might see he was offended.

Then the man came forward. The light from the tallow candles was dull, but by it they saw that he was deformed. He had not an ordinary hunch, but a something that protruded from the middle of his back in a strange peak. He was a singular-looking man, with long, ragged black hair. A band was tied round his head, holding his hair in place, and in this band were stuck a peacock’s feather and a Cornish crystal. His features were bold, an aquiline nose, and arched, thick black brows. His complexion was coppery, his eyes were deep-sunken, and from the hollow sockets they gleamed with a mixture of appeal, provocation, insolence, and deference. He wore a glazed oilskin suit, very long, which he kept wrapping and flapping about him with his arms; beneath it the colour of a red waistcoat or jacket, they could not distinguish which, was visible when the waterproof fell apart. He wore long wading boots.

‘Perhaps, if the ladies will take no coffee, I can amuse them,’ he said. ‘The storm is raging, and the snow falling. They cannot go forth yet.’

He took down a fiddle from a hook, put it under his chin, and then, with a bow, drew a note from it so shrill as to send a shiver through the little party assembled in his booth.

Instantly a white and liver-coloured dog dashed into the midst

from behind some bales and casks in a corner, and sat up on its hind legs before the pedlar. The man touched another string, and the dog hobbled around him limping, with one foot lame. He touched another, and the mongrel dog threw itself down and feigned death.

At a twang from the fiddle it sprang to life, and began to bark furiously.

‘Stop that cursed din!’ shouted Dennis.

At a touch of the catgut the dog ceased barking. Then the pedlar stooped, and began to fiddle a tune. The mongrel dog whined and capered about him, leaped and lodged on his shoulders. Then the man stood up, still fiddling, and began to dance, uncouthly, for he was lame, whilst the dog balanced itself on his shoulders, and jumped over his head from one shoulder to the other.

The gentlemen laughed, and applauded, some hammered the table, others rapped on the floor with their heels.

Then the man bent his head, and played, dancing bowed double, and the dog capered on his back. Thereupon everyone was able to see the malformation of the pedlar’s back. The oilskin, much cracked, was strained over it. As the dog danced, or rather struggled to maintain its place, it set its hind feet on the hump.

The grating music was intolerable to Dennis’s highly wrought nerves. He called to the man to desist, but Gerans protested, and urged the man to go on.

Loveday looked about her. The scene was strange. The dark interior of the booth was faintly illumined by the candles, which were few, and burning with long red wicks. The wares of the man exhaled an unpleasant, mildewy odour; old bales were visible in corners done up in tarpaulin that was bursting, and through the rents appeared dank, half-decayed shreds of cloth issuing, it seemed to her, dripping, as if they were soaked with water. Old iron chains, anchors, locks, keys, scales, all corroded with rust, were lying about or heaped on casks, the bands of which were burst, and the staves falling asunder.

The gale without growled and shook the booth, and the curtain bulged in.

Near the entrance was a long basket, covered with oilcloth, black, with a leather thong attached to it at each end for slinging over the neck. The pedlar went to this now, seated himself on it, and made the dog go through several not very extraordinary

tricks, as jumping through a hoop, dancing among plates, standing on his head, begging for food, and snapping only when told so to do.

At this, Dennis burst into a loud derisive laugh. 'Have done with this folly,' he said; 'it is offensive to me to see a cur brought to this docility. There is only one sight more offensive, and that is to see such docility in a man.' He looked at Rose, and laughed loudly. Rose coloured, and lowered her eyes. She remembered what she had said of Gerans.

Again there broke forth from the rest of the gentlemen present an unanimous remonstrance against this interruption, with shouts of, 'Go on, Hunchback! Don't mind him. Show us what the dog can do.'

'Had we not better start on our return, Dennis?' asked Loveday, 'it will be so late when we arrive at Nantsillan.'

'No, no, Miss Penhalligan,' said Gerans; 'remember I have to drive you home, not he. Moreover, we cannot leave in this storm, or till the moon rises, which will be in half an hour.'

Then the pedlar stood still for a moment, and, in the hush which supervened, the thud of the wind on the wooden walls, the roar as it swept round the corner, the clash of the hail on the roof were heard by all, and a shiver went through them.

The pedlar struck up a merry tune and began to dance, and the dog to stand on its hind legs and dance with him; at first he played very slowly, as though performing a funeral march, but he gradually quickened his pace, swaying himself as he did so, and tossing his head and feathers, and as the music quickened so did his movements, his ungainly twists, and leaps, and lurches. He span about on his heels and the dog revolved round him, then they danced a figure 8 chain, then the dog revolved on his hind feet, and the pedlar capered, still fiddling, round him. He threw up his booted legs and the dog bounded over them, he went suddenly down on the ground and the dog leaped over him, then he went up to his full height again and danced heel and toe furiously. The horrible instrument, out of tune, badly played, the discords, the piercing squeaks, the barks and yelps of the dog, were more than Dennis Penhalligan could endure. He called again and again to the man to desist. He stamped and put his hands to his ears.

The sight was so painful, so unpleasant to a delicate taste, that both Loveday and Rose turned away their heads. The movements

of the poor deformed man were hideous and grotesque, exciting the laughter and applause of the men, flushed with wine and spirits, but repulsive to the two girls. Rose, indeed, after turning away, looked again ; but Loveday was unable to endure the sight, which was to her refined taste as distressing as the harsh, discordant music was to her brother's sensitive ear.

'Let us go, Dennis,' she whispered, 'do let us go!' At that moment the pedlar drew from his instrument a high-pitched, prolonged, quivering scream, so ear-piercing and torturing that Penhalligan, inflamed with drink and irritation, caught up something on a cask close at hand and dashed it at the head of the performer.

At the same moment the curtain at the door was flung aside, the wind roared in, and extinguished every light.

(To be continued.)

THE NATIONAL SPORTS OF CANADA.

By sports like these are all their cares beguill'd.—GOLDSMITH.

THE Canadians, loving their fine, bracing winter time, have made it the season for mirth and jollity, laying upon its icy lap the pick and choice of their national sports, and leaving the other divisions of the year more or less unprovided for. Still, in the very midst of, and yet apart from the host of exotic recreations that find a summer home in the Dominion, there is one that stands forth prominently, proud in the consciousness of native individuality. This is Lacrosse, the national game, *par excellence*, of Canada, the oldest of all North American pastimes, a reminiscence of the bygone days of savagery, when the smoke from the stockaded wigwam village curled up among the branches of trees that have long since given place to the populous cities and thriving farms of the grasping 'pale-face.' The wigwams have vanished, their ancient owners have returned to the dust from which they came, and their remote descendants, a weak and indolent race, live to-day only to see themselves vanquished at every turn in their own great game by the usurpers of the soil.

The antiquity of Lacrosse is beyond question. It must have been known to the American aborigines long anterior to that momentous Friday morning upon which Columbus first feasted his weary eyes on the green foliage of San Salvador. The earliest absolute record we have of the game dates from the middle of the seventeenth century, when Pontiac, the powerful and jealous chief of the Hurons, planned a massacre of the whites in his territory on a truly Indian scale of craftiness, and sought cunningly, but unsuccessfully, to conceal his treachery under the guise of a grand Lacrosse match. The game as played in those days must, however, have differed materially from its present form. Among the Choctaws, Pawnees, and other wild tribes of the far west, scores of players participate on both sides, and unutterable confusion is, for the most part, the result. This, we take it, must have been the nature of the sport in Pontiac's time, for it is not in the Indian character to be a passive onlooker on the occasion of any excitement. But the Lacrosse of to-day is a science, and 'twelve good men and true' is the limit for either side.

The accessories of the game are few and simple. The 'stick,' or 'hurdle,' as it is technically termed, consists of a piece of white ash, perfect in grain, bent at the upper end into the form of a large crook, somewhat after the fashion of the gigantic walking sticks of our grandfathers. From the curve thus formed to the straight part of the stick run diagonal strands of strongest catgut, these being crossed again at right angles by transverse cords, and the whole woven into a coarse but firm network, the ends of which are passed through the wood and secured therein. Upon this network must the ball be carried, or through its agency must it be thrown, and by no other means is it lawful to touch, handle, or project the missile. The ball is composed of solid rubber, has a diameter of slightly more than two inches, and generally weighs about four ounces.

Canada swarms with Lacrosse clubs of various degrees of efficiency and importance, but all acknowledge unhesitatingly the superior prowess of the two 'great originals,' the 'Torontos' of Toronto, and the 'Shamrocks' of Montreal. For years these two have done battle fierce and valiant for the ascendancy with fluctuating success, and for many seasons the championship banners have alternated with monotonous regularity between the Commercial Metropolis and the 'Queen City of the West.' It was a part of the 'Toronto' club that visited England two or three years ago with a picked 'team' of Indians, and played a series of games in various parts of the country; and last summer a reciprocal journey was undertaken by a 'twelve' of Irish players who went over to test the skill of the principal Canadian clubs. As to the Indian players, whatever they may have been under Pontiac's *régime*, they certainly are no match to-day for their white brethren. In fleetness of foot, endurance, native sagacity and cunning, they leave little to be desired, but in *collective* or 'team' play, the feature that invariably tells for evil or good in a well-contested game, they are vastly inferior to the 'pale-faces.'

Lacrosse, with every right to the distinction, has been termed the 'spectator's game,' and in this respect can claim superiority over even the ever-popular football, inasmuch as no technical knowledge whatever of the Canadian sport is requisite to the onlooker's full appreciation of the 'play.' Once the ball is passed between the flags at either end of the ground, a goal is scored; there are no 'minor points' to distract the attention; three goals out of five give the victory, and the game is at an end. But

between two evenly balanced 'twelves,' whose members are masters of the science of the game, and have at their fingers' ends all the quips and quibbles of 'rubber' and 'hurdle,' no more intensely interesting and exciting contest can be imagined.

Of the Dominion's winter sports, Skating, though it cannot be termed distinctly *national*, is far and away the amusement most widely indulged in by all classes of the pleasure-loving Canadians. 'Young men and maidens, old men and children,' are all enthusiastic devotees at the shrine of the bright steel blade. The ambition of the Canadian skater is insatiable; his motto is 'Excelsior'; his aim is always at some point far above his present attainments.

Much, however, as the pre-eminent excellence of the Canadian skater's work is due to his unflagging zeal and energy, if comparisons are to be drawn between him and his European brother in the art, allowances must be made for climatic conditions and facilities which operate strongly to the advantage of the 'Canuck.'

In many Canadian towns the skating rink very successfully fills the place of, and always paves the way for, the theatre. No village, however unimportant politically, or insignificant physically, can presume to lift up its head and say 'Behold me!' until the rink is an established institution. These rinks are quite as much a necessity as a luxury; for the heavy snowfalls, setting in closely upon the heels of the first hard frost, render a season of skating on the natural ice of rivers and lakes both troublesome and inconvenient, and at most times impossible. So the rink owes its existence to the suggestions of necessary comfort, and in its construction little is left undone that may tend to increase the enjoyment of its patrons. The winter skating rinks are of two classes—the covered, or partially covered, and the open—and the latter is always popular on a bright sharp night, when the star-studded expanse of the heavens will ever find more favour as a canopy in the eyes of man than can be made of planks, beams, and rafters. Accommodation is always provided for non-skating spectators, and there is truly a certain amount of pleasure—rather chilly pleasure, be it confessed—to be derived from watching the constantly advancing and receding stream of light-hearted humanity entering into or emerging from the cosy dressing-rooms, the whirling crowds upon the ice itself, the merry laughter rippling upwards through the clear, frosty air, and the thousand and one characteristic features of a 'night on the ice.'

During the long winter season the distinguishing feature of the Canadian rinks is the carnival. In the large cities hardly a week passes that is not signalled by one of these popular masquerades at some favourite rink, and a more brilliant and showy spectacle it would be difficult to imagine than that presented by the interior of the rink on the night of the fancy *fête*. The smooth, carefully scraped ice, glittering in the pale white radiance of the electric light, is gradually covered from end to end with fantastically garbed figures, gliding about mysteriously with masked faces, now waltzing to the strains of the band, now flying swiftly around in the mazy intricacies of a reel or country dance, now forming a group in some less crowded corner and executing with marked precision and delicacy the mystic outlines of some complicated 'trick' evolution. There are Norman knights, Knights Templars, and Crusaders skimming along side by side with Jews, Turks, and Early Saxons. Cavaliers and Roundheads are on terms of the utmost amity, and flirt indiscriminately with Norwegian peasant girls and Swiss shepherdesses. Coachmen and grooms, pages and footmen, clown, harlequin, and pantaloons, Red Indians from the Assiniboine, and Cossacks from the Steppes of the Don, mingle in chaotic confusion with laced and ruffed courtiers of the Louis Quatorze period and 'bloods' and gallants of the Georgian era. The evening passes gaily amid the music, the brilliant lights, and the ring and clink of the shining steels, and, when nine o'clock strikes and masks disappear as if by magic, there is not a dull face in the whole of the vast gathering of merry-makers. Prizes are generally given at the principal carnivals, usually for the most fanciful or the most correct male and female costumes of the evening.

Nothing short of the sudden and complete cessation of these masquerades could serve to fully bring home to the minds of the people the boon that is conferred by their continuance. How pleasantly and with what wholesome cheerfulness they while away the hours of the long winter nights, when other amusements are not available or have palled upon the taste! A fancy-dress skating carnival is never slow or tedious. It is an epitome of all that is mentally and physically invigorating and refreshing.

Before leaving this subject it may be interesting to mention that the largest winter skating rink under complete cover in Canada (and possibly in all America) is the Victoria Rink at Montreal, a brick edifice of unusual proportions, affording extraordinary

facilities for the comfort and enjoyment of devotees of the graceful art. The most extensive uncovered or open rink is that of Moss Park at Toronto, probably the largest ice surface in the world prepared for, and exclusively devoted to, the use of skaters. It has an area of many acres, lighted throughout by electricity, and is thronged daily and nightly by enthusiastic crowds of gay revellers. In nearly all the covered rinks a portion of the ice surface is reserved for the delectation of the sons of Scotia, where the 'roaring game' of the broom and the 'stane' may be indulged in to heart's content. The skates standing highest in popular favour in Canada are the Acme Club skates, composed entirely of nickel-plated steel, and clasped to the foot by a single spring. The old-fashioned article of wood, steel, and straps has fallen into such disuse as to be almost a curiosity. Gold-plated skates exist, and have of late years become very popular, but they are, as yet, far beyond the capacity of the pockets of the 'masses.'

Sleighing as an amusement in Canada has one great and distinguishing feature—it is an example of the actual conversion of an indispensable constituent of man's convenience into a form of recreation, and by virtue of this singularity, apart even from other special characteristics, it is worthy of a certain meed of attention. There is something so exhilarating in the *passive action* (if we may be allowed to use a term so anomalous) of a sleigh in motion, that goes far to explain the readiness with which pleasure-loving man should have sought to deprive stern necessity of some of its despotic triumph, and devise a means of occasionally wearing its yoke for the mere 'fun of the thing.'

The Russians are, *par excellence*, the sleigh drivers of the Old World, and the Russian sledge with its three horses and its arch of jangling bells is a sight worth seeing and a sound worth hearing; but the sledge peculiar to the great Northern Empire retains, with all its comfort and *braverie* of appearance, a certain old-fashioned cumbrousness that is conspicuous by its absence from the construction of the dainty Canadian 'cutter,' with its gracefully curved, spider-legged runners, and light, delicately modelled, but withal commodious body. The Russians are the only rivals of the Canadians of to-day in sleighing as a pleasure, and nowhere in the world, outside of St. Petersburg, is the true magnificence of the sunny side of winter life to be seen to such advantage as in Great St. James Street, Montreal, on a bright January afternoon, when the wealth, beauty, and fashion of the Canadian metropolis enliven

the scene with their presence, and the long broad street becomes a brilliant panorama of prancing horses, silvery, jingling bells, gay liveries, rich furs, and costly equipages.

The Tandem Sleighing Club of Montreal is an institution that has risen of late years very high in popular favour, and one of their 'meets' in the height of the winter season constitutes a combination of splendour and taste that is not seen to be readily forgotten. And certainly the *jeunesse dorée* of both sexes in the cities and towns make wondrous practical show of their knowledge of how the good things of Canadian winter life should be enjoyed, in their long breezy drives with 'cutter' and mettlesome steed over the well-kept suburban roads, with supper at some neat little wayside hostelry, and the bracing return homeward through the keen, biting air, under the clear, brilliant moonlight of the northern skies. There is an indifference to all outward and foreign influences, an appreciation only of the deeds of the moment, connected with such pleasuring as this, that, once experienced, is ever afterward a joyous memory. And what in all this weary world can more completely withdraw one from the cares and worries of life, than the making ready of the rough old countrified sleigh (with its rude rack upon which, perhaps, has reposed many a marketable load of scented hay, many a cord of dry maple or birch, rich in combustible qualities of special value), the piling on of a dozen heavy buffalo robes, the harnessing of the impatient, pawing steeds, sniffing the air with keen expectation of the wild sport to come? Then the scramble for places among the laughing crowd of merrymakers, the start, the long hard gallop through the frosty air, the reckless dash into a yawning 'pitch-hole,' and the shout of triumph that hails the emerging therefrom with 'all hands safe.' And then the return beneath the waning light of the crescent moon, the rhythmic clatter of the horses' iron hoofs upon the crisp roadway, the whistling of the smooth steel 'runners' over the beaten snow, the wild jingling of the bells, and the snatches of song caught up by the night wind and whirled among the branches of the wayside trees! The night flies like a dream, the memory of the dream remains with us always.

There is in Canada only one species of the *sledge proper* extant, excepting, of course, the Esquimaux sled; this is the Victoria, a conveyance peculiar to Quebec and largely used by the hack-drivers of the cities and towns of that Province. The Victoria consists of a plain box-like body, quite destitute of orna-

mentation, mounted upon two low runners of *solid* wood, with a little perch-like seat in front for the driver. This little sleigh is exceedingly comfortable, and will accommodate one or two persons conveniently. It is very small and light, and for the speedy accomplishment of a long journey no better vehicle can be selected.

We come now to three sports, all of which may be set down as possessing a pure Canadian, or at least American, individuality. These are Snowshoeing, Tobogganing, and Ice-boating.

How or by whom the use of snowshoes was originally introduced must remain a more or less insoluble mystery. We can trace a faint similarity in the species of long wooden skate employed by some of the mountaineers of Sweden and Norway to expedite the descent of the hills of those countries; but, beyond the fact of the very slight resemblance of the one to the other, no real connection can be said to exist. Indeed it would perhaps be more plausible for the Norwegian mountain skate to join issue and claim kindred with the steel blade of our modern, every-day rink. There have been vague statements put forward to the effect that the snowshoe in a modified form is in use among the denizens of Asia's Arctic territories; but, to the best of our belief, these assertions lack authoritative confirmation. It is only in isolated cases, even, among the northernmost of the Esquimaux tribes of North America, that these aids to winter locomotion are to be found; truth to tell, apart from the physical disadvantages of diminutive stature which would militate strongly against the success of the average Esquimo as a snowshoer, he generally manages matters to his complete satisfaction with dog-train and sled, and has little or no need for means of support, other than his own broad and thickly muffled feet, upon the frozen, crusted snow of the regions bordering on the Arctic Circle. We must therefore accept that solution of the problem which suggests that the snowshoe proper is one of the numerous offspring of the prolific and inventive brains of the Aborigines resident within the temperate zone of the North American Continent. It is rarely indeed that the heavy winter snowfalls of these districts develop any formation of crusted surface sufficiently firm to support the weight of a man, and it is thus evident that the snowshoe, like most modern institutions of importance, owes its creation to the commands of that powerful incentive to human ingenuity—necessity. Many a lordly moose and elk, run down to his death in the deep, yielding snow-banks, could his brutish thoughts have been expressed

in words, would surely with his last breath have uttered a regretful plaint against the fatal expertness of the Canadian Indian in the management of this invention.

The snowshoe exists to-day in various shapes and sizes, from the broad, squat, and, it must be admitted, ugly, yet useful and even indispensable factor of the hunter's life, to the long, slim, lightly and delicately constructed 'racing shoe,' used by competitors in the club steeplechases and 'cross country' contests. A general description will, however, be sufficiently satisfying to the ordinary reader. First, then, a long strip of green ash, carefully selected with a view to its perfect grain and freedom from knots, is trimmed to a thickness of about three-quarters of an inch square. This strip is then bent into a pear-shaped oval, and the two ends are firmly fastened together. These ends, corresponding to the stem of the pear, form the 'heel' of the snowshoe. Two transverse bars are next inserted at distances of about eight and ten inches from the 'toe' and 'heel' respectively; these serve to strengthen and retain the shape of the oval, and are also valuable aids to the attaching of the superficial or supporting area of the shoe, which follows. In the two small spaces between the 'heel' and 'toe' of the shoe and the crossbars already mentioned is woven a delicate network of thin, wet catgut, made from the intestines of the deer. This network is something similar in pattern and texture to the meshes of a coarse lace curtain, and the ends of the catgut used in its formation are passed *through* the frame of wood and firmly and neatly secured therein. Next, the large central space of the shoe is covered in the same manner, with these exceptions, that the catgut used is much thicker and stronger than that employed for 'heel' and 'toe,' in consequence of the greater weight it must of necessity sustain, and that, at the outer edges of the network the gut, instead of being passed *through* the frame, is wrapped *round* it for greater strength and security. In covering this part of the shoe, a small space, some three or four inches square, is left vacant immediately 'abaft' the toe crossbar, and behind this hole again a thong of deerskin is affixed, through which the foot of the wearer is passed when the snowshoe is fastened on. This little opening admits of the rise and fall of the wearer's toes, and consequently of the *natural* movement of the foot.

In connection with the above it may not be out of place to mention at this juncture that many a beginner is brought to

untimely grief, and covered with needless humiliation, simply through acting upon the misguided belief that walking in snowshoes and walking in boots must be conducted upon widely different principles. Nothing could possibly be more erroneous. A *perfectly natural* movement of the foot, as in ordinary walking, is the *sine quâ non* of successful snowshoeing, and everything in the construction of the shoe itself goes to confirm this statement. The feet should be carefully kept at their *usual* distance apart, and the snowshoes raised easily and without straining—unconsciously, if possible—and passed *over* each other at every step. A moment's consideration of the *shape* of the snowshoe will reveal the readiness with which this may be accomplished. *Les joyeuses raquettes* are neither unmanageable nor cumbersome to anyone who will devote the first hour of his acquaintance with them to studying their peculiar form, construction, and capabilities; and when this has been done it will be quickly perceived that the more *natural* the gait of the would-be snowshoer, the more speedy his attainment of a facile and graceful progression.

The shoe being completed as to its actual manufacture is now laid aside, and the catgut, in the process of drying, contracts to such a degree as to render the whole fabric a marvel of solidity and strength. It is then ready for the addition of such embellishment or ornamentation as the fancy of the maker may suggest. This usually takes the form of the insertion, at regular intervals in the outer frame, of divers small tufts of red, blue, and green wool, but it must be confessed that this method of adornment produces anything but a happy effect.

All other snowshoes, however much they may vary in minor details, are constructed upon the general principles mentioned in the above description. The racing shoe is the only one possessing any distinct peculiarities. It is made very long, averaging from four to five feet in length 'over all,' and combines a great preponderance of 'heel' with exceeding shortness of 'toe,' the latter having a marked upward curve, to diminish as much as possible all chances of tripping, which it is not easy sometimes to avoid, in the excitement of a prolonged run over a rough piece of country. The best shoes of all kinds and sizes are made by the Indians of the lower part of the Province of Quebec.

Snowshoeing, as a Canadian sport, enjoys widespread and well-merited popularity, principally in Quebec and the northern parts of Ontario. The snowfalls of Western Ontario are neither of

sufficient depth nor duration, as a rule, to allow of any great attention being paid to the pastime in that portion of the Dominion, while the hardy settlers in Manitoba and the great North-West Territories do not, as a rule, devote much of their time to sport of any other than a strictly indispensable nature.

One characteristic of this amusement, to which may be traced a large measure of its popularity, is that it is one of the few recreative exercises that may be thoroughly enjoyed by the participant *solus*. True, the trite convivial adage 'The more the merrier' applies with undiminished fitness to this diversion as to all others; still, the fact remains that solitude holds little or no mournful sway over the ardent snowshoer, who is gifted with a moderate share of spirits, and who loves the pastime for itself alone. The writer speaks from experience, and can recall at this moment the unalloyed pleasure of many an hour of vigorous 'tramping' over miles of the white, crumbling surface, its particles glistening like myriad diamonds in the winter sunshine, and all this with no other companion than his pipe, his own reflections, and perhaps a dog—with no sounds to break the perfect stillness of a semi-wilderness save the regular *crush, crush*, of the shoes in the yielding powdery snow, and the monotonous yet musical creak of the frozen catgut. And now, even after the lapse of years, memory lingers lovingly over every footfall of those long, solitary 'tramps.' But man is a gregarious animal after all; he delights in collective rather than in individual action, and perhaps the fulness of the enjoyment of snowshoeing can be partaken of through no better medium than that of the clubs. Montreal, which may worthily be ranked as the great head and centre of the Canadian winter sports, is filled to overflowing with these organisations, and they certainly constitute a feature of winter life in the Dominion deserving of special mention.

The most unique of all the characteristics of the snowshoe club is the costume, and it would be hard indeed to find a more effective combination of the picturesque and the comfortable. The dress in its entirety consists of a white blanket coat of the 'frock' cut, reaching halfway to the knees, and ornamented as to its skirts with the multi-coloured stripes common to the modern blanket, of questionable taste, but possessing a certain attractiveness. Attached to the collar of the coat, and hanging midway down the back, is the uncouth *capuchin*, of a shape borrowed from the cowl of the monks of the order from which it takes its name.

This is, however, more for ornament than use, the real head-dress of the snowshoer being the knitted woollen *tuque*, a bag-shaped cap, pulled partially over the ears, the top, to which is affixed a large tassel, allowed to droop and fall over on one side, thus suggesting to some extent the headgear of the Royal Artillery. A woven sash, wound many times about the waist and knotted over the hip, blanket knickerbockers, long woollen stockings, and moccasins, complete the uniform. The coat is almost invariably of white blanket cloth, but the other constituent parts of the costume, *tuque*, sash, and stockings, are chosen of those colours which are proper to the 'livery' of the club to which the wearer belongs, and the blankets for the coats, even, are selected with a view to their embellishing stripes being in conformity with this requirement. Of all the costume 'liveries' affected by the numerous clubs in Montreal, assuredly the prettiest is that of the St. George Snowshoe Club, an organisation largely composed of adherents of the merry knight of the dragon and lance. The colours of this uniform are exclusively purple and white, and a richer or more tasteful combination could hardly have been chosen. White blanket coat with purple edgings, white blanket knickerbockers, purple stockings, and purple sash; the *tuque*, surmounting all, being composed of alternate broad horizontal bars of purple and white, with tassel of the former colour. This club, the Alpha, and several others admit lady members, and *Quel mal y a-t-il à cela?* Surely pretty faces and bright eyes must be an acquisition anywhere. They supply the crowning charm of the noble sport, and there are no more indefatigable and enthusiastic snowshoers than the daughters of Canada. Their costume differs from that of the men only inasmuch as the blanket coat, in their case, becomes an ulster, constructed upon the most approved principles of the tailoring art, and extending to the ankles. They wear the *tuque* and the sash in common with the members of the sterner sex. There are in Montreal upwards of a dozen snowshoe clubs, all of perfect organisation and in flourishing circumstances. The prince of them all, the pioneer of Canada, is the great 'Montreal' Club, whose members are wearers of the famed *tuque bleue*. This institution has a following of many hundreds, and it may not be uninteresting here to accompany them upon one of their periodical tramps by night, which outings are the snowshoeing events of the season.

First, then, to the *rendezvous*. Moving briskly about beneath

the leafless branches of the trees in McGill College grounds, and standing in small groups in the broad thoroughfare of Sherbrooke Street, are to be seen scores of blanket-coated *raquetteurs*, their snowshoes slung over their shoulders, chatting gaily, smoking silently, or casting weatherwise glances skywards and discussing the prospects for a fine night or the reverse. Every minute augments the crowd, as fresh contingents from the more distant parts of the city put in an appearance. The bustle increases now; the groups in the road grow larger and talk more animatedly. The order of march is being arranged by the officers, the paraffine torches are distributed, and a final scrutiny of snowshoe-strings takes place. Then, sharp upon the hour, the start is made. They march, rank by rank, through the streets thronged with interested spectators, and up to the foot of the mountain road, where the necessary depth of snow is to be found. Here the snowshoes are donned, and the night's work begins. Up they go, along the lower ridges and terraced roads of the mountain, up, up, till they pass the circling belt of hillside villas, and the torches, free at last from competitive gas-lamps, flash out merrily among the dark Mount Royal pines, and the *raquetteurs*, in long, attenuated procession, file slowly up the breathless slopes till a summit is gained. Here there is a respite, a short pause; the torches waver fitfully for an instant against the dull indistinguishable background of trees; then a quick movement, and sudden darkness. Torches, snowshoes, trees, white coats, all have vanished. Nothing but the huge rugged bulk of the mountain, standing in dim relief against the purple sky, remains; and we in the streets down below wait patiently and expectantly. Anon a faint, spark-like flash is seen far up in the gloom; then another and another quickly follow, succeeded by a dull, confused glimmer of many lights. After a momentary exertion our eyes adapt themselves to the new focus, and again we watch the long thin line toil slowly up the steep like a string of tiny struggling stars. Now the last belt of firs has been traversed, the last summit is reached, and the torches flash out upon the mountain top. There is another short pause, another hurried movement, then the distant lights nod us a wavering farewell, and are gone.

We might follow them still further—down the bosky slopes and dark ravines of the other side. We might hear the sharp quick word of command, and the merry shout, signals for a wild

dash at break-neck speed over some deep-drifted plateau; we might listen to the gay mocking laughter that greets the downfall of the luckless novice, and even join in the yell that hails his extrication, heels foremost, from the treacherous snow-bank; we might trace them on to their ultramontane destination at 'Lumpkin's' or 'Prendergast's,' and perhaps play our part at the supper, and the dance that follows, where rigid etiquette gives place to jollity; and we might return with them in the 'wee sma' hours,' when grey clouds perchance will hide the stars, and the torches flicker fitfully through the feathery flakes of a snowfall. We might do this; but, after all, the pen is weak, and is powerless to portray a picture over the mere outline of which the artist's brush itself would falter.

In point of absurdity there could hardly be any means of transit from the top of a hill to the bottom thereof (since the days of the Greenwich diversion, now fallen, we believe, into disuse) more perfect than that which is so fully exemplified by tobogganing, the sport now demanding our attention. It has been styled the 'nervous sport,' and the term fits closely, for surely no other form of adventurous recreation could be so replete with excitement or so plentifully besprinkled with that seeming danger which is the true spice of existence, excepting, perhaps, the shooting of Niagara Falls on a tea-tray, or a deliberate and premeditated descent, *per* tricycle, of the dome of St. Paul's! And yet, who shall depict the strange fascination that encircles tobogganing as if with a mystic halo? Who shall attempt to describe the unconquerable yearnings of the tyro to repeat the experiment, the very moment he is conscious of having safely accomplished the first wild and tremulous plunge? Looked at from a matter-of-fact standpoint, the sport is, as we have said, absurd; viewed by the eye of Prudence, it is fraught with many a peril; and yet we shall here set down no words but those of praise for the art of the venturesome tobogganeer.

In construction the toboggan is simplicity itself. Two or three long broad strips of hard smooth-grained wood are planed down to a thickness not exceeding a quarter of an inch, and, after they have been carefully steamed to superinduce the necessary flexibility, are placed side by side and securely fastened together by four or five thin transverse bars of wood. Then the ends which have been steamed are bent upwards and backwards, and securely fastened in a semicircular position by means of wires. This

upturned end constitutes the 'bow' of the toboggan. Two other thin strips, about an inch square, are then fastened along the sides, and thus, with the addition of a narrow cushion, the simple contrivance is ready for use. It is made in large quantities at sleigh, carriage, and wooden-ware factories, and is exceedingly cheap.

The toboggan is no exception to the rule which governs many another instrument of recreation, inasmuch as it owes its existence primarily to the promptings of importunate necessity. It is merely an uncomplicated modification of the Esquimaux sled, and was originally used by the northern tribes of Indians for the conveyance of burdens through, or rather *over*, the deep, powdery snow of the forests, in which the ordinary sleigh would, from the nature of its construction, be virtually useless. Then, of course, as time passed on, the merrymaking 'pale-face' became sensible of its other good qualities, and forthwith exalted it from the depths of drudgery to the heights of popularity.

The home of tobogganing as an amusement may be in any land blessed with hills and an abundance of snow to cover them; but, in reality, the sport is indigenous to Canada. A favourite pastime of a somewhat similar character, termed 'coasting,' is largely indulged in by 'our American cousins,' but there the small, runnered sleigh is used instead of the toboggan. This form of the sport is also popular among the youth of Canada, but it is never likely to vie with the true native version from the fact that it adds to the ordinary dangers of the latter several extraordinary perils peculiarly its own, which find their chief exponents in the long, sharp-pointed runners of the 'coasting' sleigh. Added to this disadvantage, a smooth, hard surface is an almost indispensable condition of good 'coasting,' while tobogganing is not by any means so exacting in its requirements.

The earthly paradise of the tobogganeer, like that of the snow-shoer, is the hilly regions of the province of Quebec and the northern part of Ontario, Western Canada falling short of the necessary attributes, principally from the flat nature of its surface. At Ottawa, the capital of the Dominion, the sport is to be seen in an advanced state of perfection, and the Marquis of Lorne, during the term of his Governor Generalship, gave a powerful impetus to its progress towards popularity in that city. In the grounds attached to the residence of Rideau Hall, magnificent

natural and artificial toboggan slides were developed and constructed, and the spirited pastime was heartily enjoyed by many a merry party from among the guests of the vice-regal establishment. Montreal also with its fine physical facilities has taken a high position in the development of this favourite sport. Here are many established clubs, and on the small mountain of Côte St. Antoine is one of the best toboggan slides in the Dominion. This spot is the sliding ground of the Montreal Club, and is patronised night and day by thousands of the members and their friends. The descent comprises nearly two thousand feet of an incline down the face of the mountain, finishing with a supplementary 'spin' of several hundred yards out over the crusted surface of the 'flats' at the foot of the hill. At Montreal there have, of late years, been introduced several innovations in the tobogganing art, none of which can fairly be deemed improvements upon the established form. Perhaps the novelty most worthy of note is that which has, for some inscrutable reason, received the appellation of 'the Russian toboggan slide.' This consists of two inclined planes (artificial, of necessity), placed *vis-à-vis*, the foot of the one almost joining that of the other. The momentum acquired in the slide down the one plane carries the toboggan to the top of the opposite incline. The advantage claimed for this contrivance is that the climbing, which is a necessary adjunct and consequence of the old-fashioned slide, is in this manner obviated. All very nice this, for the lazy tobogganeer who seeks for a life 'all beer and skittles,' but give us, and indeed give all those who love the daring sport faithfully and disinterestedly, the long 'whistling' dash down the pine-clad slopes of Côte St. Antoine, and we can well afford that those who grumble to climb the hill as a slight recompense to nature for the pleasure she has provided in the descent, should seek solace in 'modern improvements.'

It has been reserved for the 'ancient capital' of the Dominion, grey, drowsy, quaint Quebec, to place the proud crown of perfection upon tobogganing as a sport. There, a few short miles out of the picturesque old fortress, the famous Falls of Montmorenci pour their waters in a long silvery thread over the cliffs, and in the hard frosty winters of Lower Canada the spray at the foot of these falls freezes upwards to a height of over eighty feet, forming an almost perpendicular cone of ice, its base resting upon the shores of the broad St. Lawrence. This icy hill constitutes an

opportunity which it would be flat ingratitude in the eyes of the tobogganeer to neglect. So thither troop, on the sunny winter afternoons and moonlight nights the *beaux* and *belles* of the brave old city, to join in the revelry so dear to the Canadian heart.

Reader, you cannot do better than take the steep plunge in imagination, unless perchance you have already tasted the sweets of the reality. If prepared only for the voyage 'on paper,' fancy yourself upon the top of the cone; it is your turn to make the descent; the toboggan, a small one, lies before you and your party is ready. There are only two of them besides yourself—perhaps a pair of merry, laughing girls; the others stand back hesitatingly, and your powers of persuasion are exercised in vain. They are

Cabin'd, cribb'd, confined, bound in
To saucy doubts and fears.

Well, well, time presses and you cannot wait. The venturesome two, who are confiding themselves to your nerve and skill, take their places on the forward part of the toboggan and you take yours behind. Firmly you grasp in your hands the two little metal-shod 'steering sticks,' and carefully you make sure that no misfortune lurks in a straggling end of rope, or piece of flowing drapery; then the word is given, one short strong push from behind, and, *presto*, you vanish from the ken of mortal vision. Down, down you fly; the toboggan hardly seems to touch the ice, and the conviction that you are falling into the unfathomable is almost overpowering. But you have no time for convictions, no time for thoughts, above all no time for *fear*; there are others upon the frail planks besides yourself; and the slightest error with the steering sticks might now be fatal. You remember this, and with that recollection begins the pleasure of the ride. Your enjoyment comes with the return to a consciousness of your own superiority. A second ago you left the top, now you are almost at the broad base of the cone. You are sensible of a string of black objects flying past in blurred dimness to right and left of your course—they are the climbers toiling up the little steps cut in the ice and dragging their toboggans with them. Now the terrific speed you have attained makes your breath come and go in short, quick gasps; tiny particles of ice and snow begin to dash themselves against your face; you turn your head away, and your companions hide their faces behind their knees.

The toboggan is rushing now with a whistling noise over the

crusted snow at the foot of the cone; there is a sudden quiver, a dash, and a wild plunge; you have passed through a shadowy 'pitch-hole,' the toboggan rises high in the air, everybody holds tight, and by a mere freak of whimsical good-luck you come down with a fearful crash, but 'right side up.' Then, on again, another pitch-hole, and perhaps another after that, all successfully 'taken,' and at last comes the long rushing glide over the frozen crust of the river ice; on, on, till the last ounce of momentum is exhausted, and the creaking, quivering little conveyance comes to a standstill. You feel very proud of your exploit, and your companions have recovered their breath sufficiently to pour forth their raptures in a profusion of disjointed phraseology. You look backwards and upwards, and you see the tiny, dwarf-like figures standing motionless at the top of the mighty cone—they are the friends you left some fifty seconds ago.

The costume of the tobogganeer differs in no respect from that of the snowshoer. The fair sex is the life and soul of the tobogganing clubs, and, as is the case in skating, sleighing, and snowshoeing, there are no more ardent and reckless lovers of this daring sport than the Canadian women and girls. The sport itself is at once unique, fascinating, dangerous, exhilarating, and health-giving.

Perhaps it is only 'fair play' that those portions of a country ill-favoured by nature with climatic conditions of one kind should be recompensed by an extra supply of advantages of another. This seems to be the peculiar fortune of Ontario and Western Canada generally, for, although there is in these districts a lack, for the most part, of hills suitable for the practice of tobogganing, and an insufficient depth of snow to admit of snowshoeing being fully enjoyed, still, there is never a dearth of ice. The winter frosts are always sharp, keen, and decisively productive of the best results. Some of the finest skating in Canada is to be seen in the towns and cities of Ontario, and to this, the 'Garden Province' of the Dominion, belongs the credit of having watched over and tended, with fostering care and solicitude, the early years of the last and youngest of all the sports upon our list—ice-boating.

Of the origin of that strange machine now denominated an ice-boat, we have but little information to advance that is stamped with certainty of correctness. It would seem that the boy upon skates, spreading his outstretched coat 'to catch the fav'ring gale,' might have given the first suggestion for the new departure;

but whether the idea of the ice-boat was derived in the first place from this simple source, or from the instinctive attempts of northern savages to expedite the progress of their dog-sleds over the wind-swept, snowy deserts by means of rude sails of skin, cannot be accurately determined.

The 'boat' itself is simple in construction. It consists of a triangular framework of wood, strengthened by the insertion of small joists crossing the open space in various directions, all being securely 'let into' the outer timbers. This structure is surmounted by a small box-like body for the accommodation of passengers and sailors, and the whole affair moves horizontally upon three steel runners, resembling slightly the blades of skates, which are attached to the woodwork near the apices of the triangle. A small rudder-like contrivance, also of metal, constitutes the steering apparatus, its frictional action upon the ice being, of course, the basis of its effectiveness. The one mast of the ice-boat is stepped well 'forward,' and is supported by the usual 'guys.' The canvas carried generally consists of spanker and jib, with the occasional addition of sky and balloon sails; but for obvious reasons no ice-boat can maintain its equilibrium under the press of canvas which could be sustained by an ordinary yacht of even much smaller size.

The enthusiastic 'ice-yachtsman' is as prone to the drawing of the long bow as are, almost proverbially, the patient disciples of worthy Izaak Walton; and many and marvellous are the 'yarns' delivered anent the fabulous speed attained by these 'ships of the frost and the snow.' While it is of course advisable to take many of these effusions *cum grano salis*, still, quite enough of honest merit remains to justify the ice-boat in claiming a proud position as a 'traveller,' second only to the locomotive and the balloon. Surprising, indeed, have been the results manifested for the benefit of the doubtful and incredulous. The writer can, from personal experience, vouch for the truth of the statement that, upon one occasion, an ice-boat under jib, spanker, and small sky-sail, for a distance of nearly five miles, kept well up with, and even ahead of, a passenger train travelling at the rate of certainly not less than thirty miles per hour. This exploit was accomplished, it is true, under very favourable circumstances—a fair wind, and smooth, crusted surface of snow, combining their good qualities to the advantage of the 'boat;' still, there can be no exaggeration in placing the average speed of a well-built and

well-managed ice-boat at from twenty to twenty-five miles an hour.

There can hardly be anything more severely trying than the degree of cold experienced upon a moderately fast-sailing ice-boat even in mild weather. The heavy buffalo robes piled about the *voyageur* in the little box on the breezy triangle afford but slight protection from the keen, cutting wind, that seems to pierce through every wrap and covering with knife-like sharpness. But the all-absorbing excitement of the furious rush over alternate patches of flashing ice and crisp, white snow—now grinding along upon one runner, the other two in the air, now reversing the position, but seldom moving with all three upon the ice at once—seems to supply an antidote for any quantity of physical discomfort. At the end of your trip, be it long or short, you disembark with shivering frame, chattering teeth, and face livid with cold, yet you vow you have enjoyed yourself, and you mean what you say!

Dangers in profusion lurk along the track of the reckless ice-yachtsman. A foot too much of sail, the slightest error in steering, the catching of one of the runners in the merest chip of rough surface-ice, may one and all be productive of the most serious consequences. Accidents are therefore not by any means infrequent; but it must be said, in defence of the sport in the abstract, that carelessness and ignorance are responsible for nine mishaps out of every ten.

Ice-boating as a Canadian sport is most extensively practised near the cities and towns upon the great lakes of Erie, Huron, and Ontario, where the shore ice, forming for some miles outward, affords in fairly calm seasons excellent opportunities for indulging in the novel amusement.

The inevitable 'clubs' are being inaugurated, of course, and will undoubtedly do much to advance the pastime in popular favour. Indeed, all present indications seem to favour the belief that at no distant day, ice-boating will take up its position as an indispensable concomitant of the other established institutions of the Canadian winter season.

No account, however superficial, of Canada's winter sports could be deemed complete, even within its own limits, without some slight mention of that grand symposium of brumal jollities and pleasures—the Montreal Winter Carnival. Some years ago the idea of this colossal festival originated with one of Montreal's

best-known and most widely respected snowshoers, a man whose darling ambition was the institution of a national winter *fête* in that city, but who did not live to see his numerous happy suggestions carried out. In January 1883 the first Carnival was inaugurated, chiefly through the untiring energy and resolution of a number of prominent snowshoers and tobogganeers. The quidnuncs and Marplots of the community frowned upon the daring scheme, and prophesied the failure they deemed inevitable. But the failure came not; the venture prospered beyond all expectation, and when, in the following year (1884), the great 'Palace of January' reared its flashing walls and shimmering turrets of purest crystal ice high in the frosty air, crowds poured in from all the length and breadth of the Western Hemisphere and gazed with wonder, surprise, and admiration upon the brilliant display prepared for their delectation by these benighted hyperboreans, whom many of the visitors had hitherto thought of with no other feelings than those of idle curiosity and, perhaps, pity.

No description can pretend to do justice to the appearance of the commercial metropolis during Carnival week, with its myriad sights and sounds full of a strange and wondrous interest to the visitor from foreign climes. The huge bulk of the Norman Ice-palace looms up in frigid grandeur upon the snowy surface of Dominion Square; dainty ice-grottoes lift their glittering pinnacles on high at street corners and in open places; the city dons its gala dress, and the flags of all nations stream proudly from window, balcony, and house-top; the hotels are filling rapidly; snowshoers, tobogganeers, and skaters are one and all in a fever of excitement. At last the great day comes; the place swarms with sightseers from north, south, east, and west; the inauguration takes place, the ice of the programme is broken, and then for six brief but gladsome days do

Youth and pleasure meet
To chase the glowing hours with flying feet.

From Monday to Saturday, inclusive, Montreal life in Carnival time means, to seven-eighths of the population, a ceaseless round of Skating, Snowshoeing, and Tobogganing tournaments, Curling 'bonspiels,' Hockey matches, Pyrotechnic displays and brilliant illuminations, Fancy *fêtes*, Promenade Skating Concerts, trotting races, torchlight processions of white-coated *raquetteurs*, sleighing parties, balls, steeplechases, and 'meets' of the Tandem Club. The toboggan slides, with their double rows of torches flickering

in the wind, resound by night and day with the shouts of thousands of gay carousers; the skating rinks are full to repletion, and there beneath the soft, white lights, casting countless fantastic shadows upon the smooth, shining surface, with the musical *plash plash* of running waters in the ice-grottoes ever in their ears, quaintly draped figures, moving gracefully to the strains of a military band, illustrate the great features of Canada's history, the various pursuits of life, and the great national sports of the Dominion. For one short, happy week the cares of humdrum life are laid aside—and then comes the end. The last of the many coloured lights has glimmered away its existence behind the transparent walls of the Ice-Palace; the last of the rushing rockets has lighted up all the white expanse of the St. Lawrence, even to the distant arches of Stevenson's mighty bridge, and then lost its glory in the darkness of the winter sky; the last of the snowshoer's torches has vanished like a falling star upon the wooded slopes of Mount Royal—the Carnival is over.

Then the sports of the season, that have climbed the hill of popularity to its topmost summit, pass slowly and resignedly in long procession down the other side; the rivers burst their glacial chains; the trees put forth their buds for the coming spring; and blanket-coat, *tuque*, sash, and moccasins, *raquetteur*, tobogganeer, and skater, fly to their hard-earned rest.

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF BATHURST.

THE mystery of the disappearance of Benjamin Bathurst on November 25, 1809, is one which can never with certainty be cleared up. At the time public opinion in England was convinced that he had been secretly murdered by order of Napoleon, and the 'Times' in a leader on January 23, 1810, so decisively asserted this, that the 'Moniteur' of January 29 ensuing, in sharp and indignant terms repudiated the charge. Nevertheless, not in England only, but in Germany, was the impression so strong that Napoleon had ordered the murder, if murder had been committed, that the Emperor saw fit, in the spring of the same year, solemnly to assure the wife of the vanished man, on his word of honour, that he knew nothing about the disappearance of her husband. Thirty years later Varnhagen von Ense, a well-known German author, reproduced the story and reiterated the accusation against Napoleon, or at all events against the French. Later still, the 'Spectator,' in an article in 1862, gave a brief sketch of the disappearance of Bathurst, and again repeated the charge against French police agents or soldiers of having made away with the Englishman. At that time a skeleton was said to have been discovered in the citadel of Magdeburg with the hands bound, in an upright position, and the writer of the article sought to identify this skeleton with the lost man.¹

We shall see whether other discoveries do not upset this identification, and afford us another solution of the problem—What became of Benjamin Bathurst?

Benjamin Bathurst was the third son of Dr. Henry Bathurst, Bishop of Norwich, Canon of Christchurch, and Prebendary of Durham, by Grace, daughter of Charles Coote, Dean of Kilfenora, and sister of Lord Castlecoote. His eldest brother, Henry, was Archdeacon of Norwich; his next, Sir James, K.C.B., was in the army, and was aide-de-camp to Lord Wellington in the Peninsula.

Benjamin, the third son of the bishop, was born March 14, 1784, and had been secretary of the Legation at Leghorn. In

¹ The discovery of a skeleton as described was denied afterwards by the Magdeburg papers. It was a newspaper sensational paragraph, and unfounded.

May 1805, he married Phillida, daughter of Sir John Call, Bart., of Whiteford, in Cornwall, and sister of Sir William Pratt Call, the second baronet. Benjamin is a Christian name that occurs repeatedly in the Bathurst family after the founder of it, Sir Benjamin, Governor of the East India Company and of the Royal African Company. He died in 1703. The grandfather of the subject of our memoir was a Benjamin, brother of Allen, who was created Baron in 1711, and Earl in 1772.

Benjamin had three children: a son who died, some years after his father's disappearance, in consequence of a fall from a horse at a race in Rome; and a daughter, who was drowned in the Tiber; and another who married the Earl of Castlestuart in 1830, and after his death married Signor Pistocchi.

In 1809, early in the year, Benjamin was sent to Vienna by his kinsman, Earl Bathurst, who was in the ministry of Lord Castlereagh, and, in October, Secretary of State for the Foreign Department. He was sent on a secret embassy from the English Government to the Court of the Emperor Francis. The time was one of great and critical importance to Austria. Since the Peace of Pressburg she had been quiet; the Cabinet of Vienna had adhered with cautious prudence to a system of neutrality, but she only waited her time, and in 1808 the government issued a decree by which a militia, raised by a conscription, under the name of the 'Landwehr,' was instituted, and this speedily reached the number of 300,000 men. Napoleon, who was harassed by the insurrection in the Peninsula, demanded angrily an explanation, which was evaded. To overawe Austria, he met the Emperor Alexander of Russia at Erfurth, and the latter when sounded by Austria refused to have any part in a confederation against Napoleon. England, in the meantime, was urging Austria to throw down the gauntlet. In pledge of amity, the port of Trieste was thrown open to the English and Spanish flags. In December, a declaration of the King of England openly alluded to the hostile preparations of Austria, but the Cabinet at Vienna were as yet undecided as to the course they would finally adopt. The extreme peril which the monarchy had undergone already in the wars with Napoleon made them hesitate. England was about to send fifty thousand men to the Peninsula, and desired the diversion of a war in the heart of Germany. Prussia resolved to remain neutral. Napoleon rapidly returned from Spain, and orders were despatched to Davoust to concentrate his immense corps at Bamberg; Massena was to repair to Strasburg,

and press on to Ulm; Oudenot to move on Augsburg, and Bernadotte, at the head of the Saxons, was to menace Bohemia. It was at this juncture that Benjamin Bathurst hurried as Ambassador Extraordinary to Vienna, to assure the Cabinet there of the intentions of England to send a powerful contingent into Spain, and to do all in his power to urge Austria to declare war. Encouraged by England, the Cabinet of Vienna took the initiative, and on April 8 the Austrian troops crossed the frontier at once on the Inn, in Bohemia, in Tyrol, and in Italy.

The irritation, the exasperation of Napoleon were great; and Bathurst, who remained with the Court, laboured under the impression that the Emperor of the French bore him especial enmity, on account of his exertions to provoke the Austrian Ministry to declaration of war. Whether this opinion of his were well founded, whether he had been warned that Napoleon would take his opportunity, if given him, of revenging himself, we do not know; but what is certain is, that Bathurst was prepossessed with the conviction that Napoleon regarded him with implacable hostility, and would leave no stone unturned to compass his destruction.

On July 6 came the battle of Wagram, then the humiliating armistice of Znaim, which was agreed to by the Emperor Francis at Komorn in spite of the urgency of Metternich and Lord Walpole, who sought to persuade him to reject the proposals. This armistice was the preliminary to a peace which was concluded at Schönbrunn in October. With this, Bathurst's office at Vienna came to an end, and he set out on his way home. Now it was that he repeatedly spoke of the danger that menaced him, and of his fears lest Napoleon should arrest him on his journey to England. He hesitated for some time which road to take, and concluding that if he went by Trieste and Malta he might run the worst risks, he resolved to make his way to London by Berlin and the North of Germany. He took with him his private secretary and a valet; and, to evade observation, assumed the name of Koch, and pretended that he was a travelling merchant. His secretary was instructed to act as courier, and he passed under the name of Fisher. Benjamin Bathurst carried pistols about his person, and there were firearms in the back of the carriage.

On November 25, 1809, about midday, he arrived at Perleberg, with post-horses, on the route from Berlin to Hamburg, halted at the post-house for refreshments, and ordered fresh horses to be

harnessed to the carriage for the journey to Lenzen, which was the next station.

Bathurst had come along the highway from Berlin to Schwerin, in Brandenburg, as far as the little town of Perleberg, which lies on the Stepnitz, that flows after a few miles into the Elbe at Wittenberge. He might have gone on to Ludwigslust, and thence to Hamburg, but this was a considerable détour, and he was anxious to be home. He had now before him a road that led along the Elbe close to the frontier of Saxony. The Elbe was about four miles distant. At Magdeburg were French troops. If he were in danger anywhere, it would be during the next few hours—that is, till he reached Dömitz. About a hundred paces from the post-house was an inn, the White Swan, the host of which was named Leger. By the side of the inn was the Parchimer gate of the town, furnished with a tower, and the road to Hamburg led through this gate, outside of which was a sort of suburb consisting of poor cottagers' and artisans' houses.

Benjamin Bathurst went to the Swan and ordered an early dinner; the horses were not to be put in till he had dined. He wore a pair of grey trousers, a grey frogged short coat, and over it a handsome sable greatcoat lined with violet velvet. On his head was a fur cap to match. In his scarf was a diamond pin of some value.

As soon as he had finished his meal, Bathurst inquired who was in command of the soldiers quartered in the town, and where he lodged. He was told that a squadron of the Brandenburg cuirassiers was there under Captain Klitzing, who was residing in a house behind the Town Hall. Mr. Bathurst then crossed the market place and called on the officer, who was at the time indisposed with a swollen neck. To Captain Klitzing he said that he was a traveller on his way to Hamburg, that he had strong and well-grounded suspicions that his person was endangered, and he requested that he might be given a guard in the inn, where he was staying. A lady who was present noticed that he seemed profoundly agitated, that he trembled as though ague-stricken, and was unable to raise a cup of tea that was offered him to his lips without spilling it.

The captain laughed at his fears, but consented to let him have a couple of soldiers, and gave the requisite orders for their despatch; then Mr. Bathurst rose, resumed his sable overcoat, and explained that he was much shaken by something that had

alarmed him, to account for his nervous difficulty in getting into his furs again.

Not long after the arrival of Mr. Bathurst at the Swan, two Jewish merchants arrived from Lenzen with post-horses, and left before nightfall.

On Mr. Bathurst's return to the inn, he countermanded the horses; he said he would not start till night. He considered that it would be safer for him to spin along the dangerous portion of the route by night when Napoleon's spies would be less likely to be on the alert. He remained in the inn writing and burning papers. At seven o'clock he dismissed the soldiers on guard, and ordered the horses to be ready by nine. He stood outside the inn watching his portman-teau, which had been taken within, being replaced on the carriage, stepped round to the heads of the horses—and *was never seen again*.

It must be remembered that this was at the end of November. Darkness had closed in before 5 P.M., as the sun set at four. An oil lantern hung across the street, emitting a feeble light; the ostler had a horn lantern, wherewith he and the postillion adjusted the harness of the horses. The landlord was in the doorway talking to the secretary, who, as courier, was paying the account. No one particularly observed the movements of Mr. Bathurst at the moment. He had gone to the horses' heads, where the ostler's lantern had fallen on him. The horses were in, the postillion ready, the valet stood by the carriage door, the landlord had his cap in hand ready to wish the gentleman a 'lucky journey,' the secretary was impatient, as the wind was cold. They waited; they sent up to the room which Mr. Bathurst had engaged, they called. All in vain. Suddenly, inexplicably, without a word, a cry, an alarm of any sort, he was gone—spirited away, and what really became of him will never be known with certainty.

Whilst the whole house was in amazement and perplexity the Jewish merchants ordered their carriage to be got ready and departed.

Some little time elapsed before it was realised that the case was serious. Then it occurred to the secretary that Mr. Bathurst might have gone again to the captain in command to solicit guards to attend his carriage. He at once sent to the captain, but Mr. Bathurst was not with him. The moment, however, Klitzing heard that the traveller had disappeared, he remembered the alarm expressed by the gentleman, and acted with great promptitude. He sent soldiers to seize the carriage and all the

effects of the missing man. He went, in spite of his swollen neck, immediately to the Swan, ordered a chaise, and required the secretary to enter it; he placed a cuirassier and the valet on the box, and, stepping into the carriage, ordered it to be driven to the Golden Crown, an inn at the further end of the town, where he installed the companions of Bathurst, and placed a soldier in guard over them. A guard was also placed over the Swan, and next morning every possible search was made for the lost man. The river was dragged, outhouses, woods, marshes, ditches were examined, but not a trace of him could be found. That day was Sunday. Klitzing remained at Perleberg only till noon, to wait some discovery, and then, without delay, hurried to Kyritz, where was his commandant, Colonel Bismark, to lay the case before him, and solicit leave to hasten direct to Berlin, there to receive instructions what was to be done.

He was back on Monday with full authority to investigate the matter.

Before he left he had gone over the effects of Mr. Bathurst, and had learned that the fur coat belonging to him was missing; he communicated this fact to the civil magistrate of the district, and whilst he was away search was instituted for this. It was the sable coat lined with violet velvet already mentioned, and this, along with another belonging to the secretary, Fisher, who was under the impression that they had been left in the post-house.¹

There they had been found by a woman, Schmidt, the wife of the owner of the post. She coveted them, and resolved to appropriate them. The best, that of Mr. Bathurst, she gave to her son Augustus, who put it in a sack and concealed it under a heap of firewood in the cellar. The secretary, however, said he believed that both furs had been left at the post-house, and the magistrate demanded them. Frau Schmidt then produced Mr. Fisher's fur, but denied all knowledge of the other. This led to a search of her premises, and to the discovery of the coat. The family were at once placed under arrest.

On December 10, the secretary was furnished with a pass and departed for Berlin, where he went before the head of the police, Justus Gruner, to urge further investigation; at the same time he wrote to the family in England, and laid the matter before the English Ambassador.

On December 16, two poor women went out of Perleberg to

¹ The Secretary's own fur coat had been left in the post-house, but there was some uncertainty about that of Bathurst, who certainly wore it at Klitzing's.

a little fir wood in the direction of Quitzow, to pick up broken sticks for fuel. There they found, a few paces from a path leading through the wood, spread out on the grass, a pair of trousers turned inside out. On turning them back they observed that they were stained on the outside, as if the man who had worn them had lain on the earth. In the pocket was a paper with writing on it; this, as well as the trousers, was sodden with water. Two bullet holes were in the trousers, but no traces of blood about them, which could hardly have been the case had the bullets struck a man wearing the trousers. The women took what they had found to the burgomaster. The trousers were certainly those of the missing man. The paper in the pocket was a half-finished letter from Mr. Bathurst to his wife, scratched in pencil, stating that he was afraid he would never reach England, and that his ruin would be the work of Count d'Entraigues, and he requested her not to marry again in the event of his not returning.

The English Government offered 1,000*l.* reward, and his family another 1,000*l.*; Prince Frederick of Prussia, who took a lively interest in the matter, offered in addition 100 Friedrichs d'or for the discovery of the body, or for information which might lead to the solution of the mystery, but no information to be depended upon ever transpired. Various rumours circulated; and Mrs. Thistlethwaite, the sister of Benjamin Bathurst, in her *Memoirs of Dr. Henry Bathurst, Bishop of Norwich*, published by Bentley in 1853, gives them. He was said to have been lost at sea. Another report was that he was murdered by his valet, who took an open boat on the Elbe, and escaped. Another report again was that he had been lost in a vessel which was crossing to Sweden and which foundered about this time. These reports are all totally void of truth. Mrs. Thistlethwaite declares that Count d'Entraigues, who was afterwards so cruelly murdered along with his wife by their Italian servant, was heard to say that he could prove that Mr. Bathurst was murdered in the fortress of Magdeburg. In a letter to his wife, dated October 14, 1809, Benjamin Bathurst said that he trusted to reach home by way of Colberg and Sweden. D'Entraigues had been a French spy in London; and Mrs. Thistlethwaite says that he himself told Mrs. Bathurst that her husband had been carried off by *douaniers-montés* from Perleberg to Magdeburg, and murdered there. This it is hard to believe.

Thomas Richard Underwood, in a letter from Paris,

November 24, 1816, says he was a prisoner of war in Paris in 1809, and that both the English and French there believed that the crime of his abduction and murder had been committed by the French Government.

The 'European Magazine' for January 1810 says that he was apparently carried off by a party of French troops stationed at Lenzen, but this was not the case. No French troops were on that side of the Elbe. It further says, 'The French Executive, with a view to ascertain by his papers the nature of the relations subsisting between this country and the Austrian Government, has added to the catalogue of its crimes by the seizure, or probably the murder, of this gentleman.'

If there had been French troops seen we should have known of it; none were. Every effort was made by the civil and military authorities to trace Bathurst. Bloodhounds were employed to track the lost man, in vain. Every well was explored, the bed of the Stepnitz thoroughly searched. Every suspicious house in Perleberg was examined from attic to cellar, the gardens were turned up, the swamps sounded, but every effort to trace and discover him was in vain.

On January 23, 1810, in a Hamburg paper appeared a paragraph, which for the first time informed the people of Perleberg who the merchant Koch really was who had so mysteriously vanished. The paragraph was in the form of a letter, dated from London, January 6, 1810—that is, six weeks after the disappearance. It ran thus: 'Sir Bathurst, Ambassador Extraordinary of England to the Court of Austria, concerning whom a German newspaper, under date of December 10, stated that he had committed suicide in a fit of insanity, is well in mind and body. His friends have received a letter from him dated December 13, which, therefore, must have been written after the date of his supposed death.'

Who inserted this, and for what purpose? It was absolutely untrue. Was it designed to cause the authorities to relax their efforts to probe the mystery, and perhaps to abandon them altogether?

The Jewish merchants were examined, but were at once discharged; they were persons well-to-do, and generally respected.

Was it possible that Mr. Bathurst had committed suicide? This was the view taken of his disappearance in France, where, in the 'Moniteur' of December 12, 1809, a letter from the

correspondent in Berlin stated: 'Sir Bathurst on his way from Berlin showed signs of insanity, and destroyed himself in the neighbourhood of Perleberg.' On January 23, 1810, as already said, the 'Times' took the matter up, and not obscurely charged the Emperor Napoleon with having made away with Mr. Bathurst, who was peculiarly obnoxious to him.

The Schmidt family were now tried for the theft of the furs, and Frau Schmidt and her son were sentenced to eight weeks' imprisonment. The rest of the family were acquitted. At their trial Augustus said, 'The stranger, to whom the fur belonged, and who has been lost, had two pocket-pistols with him, and my mother at his request went into the town and bought him more powder.'

Unfortunately we hear nothing more about these pistols. The military authorities who examined the goods of Mr. Bathurst declared that nothing was missing except the fur cloak, which was afterwards recovered, and we suppose these pistols were included. If not, one may be sure that some notice would have been taken of the fact that he had gone off with his pistols, and had not returned. This would have lent colour to the opinion that he destroyed himself. Besides no shot was heard. A little way outside the gateway of the town beyond the Swan inn is a bridge over the small and sluggish stream of the Stepnitz. It was possible he might have shot himself there, and fallen into the water; but this theory will not bear looking closely into. A shot fired there would certainly have been heard at night in the cottages beside the road, the river was searched shortly after without a trace of him having been found, and his trousers with bullet holes made in them after they had been taken off him had been discovered in another direction.

The 'Moniteur' of January 29 said: 'Among the civilised races, England is the only one that sets an example of having bandits¹ in pay, and inciting to crime. From information we have received from Berlin, we believe that Mr. Bathurst had gone off his head. It is the manner of the British Cabinet to commit diplomatic commissions to persons whom the whole nation knows are half fools. It is only the English diplomatic service which contains crazy people.'

¹ When, in 1815, Napoleon was at St. Helena, on his first introduction to Sir Hudson Lowe, he addressed the governor with the insulting words, 'Monsieur, vous avez commandé des brigands.' He alluded to the Corsican rangers in the British service, which Lowe had commanded.

This violent language was at the time attributed to Napoleon's dictation, stung with the charge made by the 'Times,' a charge ranking him with 'vulgar murderers,' and which attributed to him two other and somewhat similar cases, that of Wagstaff, and that of Sir George Rumbold. It is very certain that the 'Moniteur' would not have ventured on such insulting language without his permission.

In April Mrs. Bathurst, along with some relatives, arrived in Perleberg. The poor lady was in great distress and anxiety to have the intolerable suspense alleviated by a discovery of some sort, and the most liberal offers were made and published to induce a disclosure of the secret. At this time a woman named Hacker, the wife of a peasant who lived in the shoe-market, was lying in the town gaol—the tower already mentioned, adjoining the White Swan. She was imprisoned for various fraudulent acts. She now offered to make a confession, and this was her statement:

'A few weeks before Christmas I was on my way to Perleberg from a place in Holstein, where my husband had found work. In the little town of Seeberg, twelve miles from Hamburg, I met the shoemaker's assistant Goldberger, of Perleberg, whom I knew from having danced with him. He was well-dressed, and had from his fob hanging a hair-chain with gold seals. His knitted silk purse was stuffed with louis d'ors. When I asked him how he came by so much money, he said, "Oh, I got 500 dollars and the watch as hush-money when the Englishman was murdered." He told me no more particulars, except that one of the seals was engraved with a name, and he had had that altered in Hamburg.'

No credit was given to this story, and no inquiry was instituted into the whereabouts of Goldberger. It was suspected that the woman had concocted it in the hopes of getting Mrs. Bathurst to interest herself in obtaining her release, and of getting some of the money offered to informers.

Mrs. Bathurst did not return immediately to England; she appealed to Napoleon to grant her information, and he assured her through Cambacière, and on his word of honour, that he knew nothing of the matter beyond what he had seen in the papers.

So the matter rested, an unsolved mystery.

In 1852 a discovery was made at Perleberg which may or may not give the requisite solution.

We may state before mentioning it that Captain Klitzing never

believed that Bathurst had been spirited away by French agents. He maintained that he had been murdered for his money.

On April 15, 1852, a house on the Hamburg road that belonged to the mason Kiesewetter was being pulled down, when a human skeleton was discovered under the stone threshold of the stable. The skeleton lay stretched out, face upwards, on the black peat earth, covered with mortar and stone chips, the head embedded in walling-stones and mortar. In the back of the skull was a fracture, as if a blow of a heavy instrument had fallen on it. All the upper teeth were perfect, but one of the molars in the lower jaw was absent, and there were indications of its having been removed by a dentist. The house where these human remains were found had been purchased in 1834 by the mason Keisewetter from Christian Mertens, who had inherited it from his father, which latter had bought it in 1803 of a shoemaker. *Mertens, the father, had been a serving man in the White Swan at the time of the disappearance of Mr. Bathurst.*

Inquiry was made into what was known of old Mertens. Everyone spoke highly of him as a saving, steady man, God-fearing; who had scraped together during his service in the Swan sufficient money to dower his two daughters respectively 150*l.* and 120*l.* After a long illness he had died, generally respected.

Information of the discovery was forwarded to the Bathurst family, and on August 23, Mrs. Thistlethwaite, sister of Benjamin, came to Perleberg, bringing with her a portrait of her brother, but she was quite unable to say that the skull that was shown her belonged to the missing man, whom she had not seen for forty-three years. And—no wonder! When Goethe was shown the skull of his intimate friend Schiller he could hardly trace any likeness to the head he remembered so well. Mrs. Thistlethwaite left, believing that the discovery had no connection with the mystery of her brother's disappearance, so ineradicably fixed in the convictions of the family was the belief that he had been carried away by French agents.

However, let us consider this discovery a little closer, and perhaps we shall be led to another conclusion.

In the first place, the skeleton was that of a man who had been murdered by a blow on the back of his head, which had fractured the skull. It had been stripped before being buried, for not a trace of clothing could be found.

Secondly, the house of the Mertens family lay on the Hamburg

road, on the way to Lenzen, outside the Parchimer Gate, only three hundred paces from the White Swan. In fact, it was separated from the White Swan only by the old town-gate and prison tower, and a small patch of garden ground.

At the time of the disappearance of Mr. Bathurst it was inhabited by Christian Mertens, who was servant at the White Swan. No examination was made at the time of the loss of Bathurst into the whereabouts of Mertens, nor was his cottage searched. It was assumed that he was at the inn waiting for his 'vale,' like the ostler and the *Kellner*. It is quite possible that he may have been standing near the horses' heads, and that he may have gone on with Mr. Bathurst a few steps to show him the direction he was to go; or, with the pretence that he had important information to give him, he may have allured him into his cottage, and there murdered him, or he may have drawn him on to where by pre-arrangement Goldberger was lying in wait with a hammer or hatchet to strike him down from behind. Considering how uneasy about the road, and how preoccupied Mr. Bathurst was with the idea that French spies and secret agents were on the look-out for him, he might easily have been induced by a servant of the inn where he was staying to go a few steps through the gate, beyond earshot of the post-boy and landlord and ostler, to hear something which the boots pretended was of importance to him. Goldberger or another may have lain in wait in the blackness of the shadow of the gateway but a short distance from the lights about the carriage, and by one stroke have silenced him. It is possible that Augustus Schmidt may have been mixed up in the matter, and that the sable coat was taken off Mr. Bathurst when dead.

Again, Mertens was able on the marriage of his two daughters to give one 150*l.* and the other 120*l.* This would mean that Mertens had saved as boots of the Swan at the least 300*l.*, for he would not give every penny to his children. Surely this was a considerable sum for a boots in a little inn to amass from his wage and from 'vales.'

Mrs. Thistlethwaite asserts in her Memoirs of Bishop Bathurst that shortly after the disappearance of her brother the ostler—can she mean Mertens?—also disappeared, ran away. But we do not know of any corroborating evidence.

Lastly, the discovery of the trousers in the wood near Quitzow points to the traveller having been murdered in Perleberg; the murderers, whoever they were, finding that an investigation of

houses, barns, gardens and stables was being made, took the garments of the unfortunate man, discharged a couple of shots through them to make believe he had been fired at by several persons lying in wait for him, and then exposed them in a place away from the road along which Mr. Bathurst was going. The man who carried these garments was afraid of being observed, and he probably did not go through the town with them, but made a circuit to the wood, and for the same reason did not take them very far. The road to Lenzen ran S.W. and that to Quitzow N.W. He placed the trousers near the latter, but did not venture to cross the highway. He could get to the wood over the fields unperceived.

Supposing, as we do, that this is the solution of the mystery, only one thing remains to be accounted for—the paragraph in the Hamburg paper dated from London, announcing that Mr. Bathurst was alive and had been heard of since the disappearance.

This, at first sight, seems to have been inserted with a design to divert or allay suspicion, and it was conjectured that it had been sent from London by a French agent, on instruction from Paris. But this is most improbable. It is more likely that the London correspondent heard a coffee-house rumour that Bathurst was still alive, and at once reported it to the paper. Its falsehood was palpable, and would be demonstrated at once by the family of the lost man to the authorities at Perleberg. It could not answer the purpose of arresting inquiry and staying investigation.

It remains only to inquire whether it was probable that Napoleon had any hand in the matter.

What could induce him to lay hands on an envoy? He could not expect to find on the person of Mr. Bathurst any important despatches, for the war was over, peace with Austria was concluded. He was doubtless angry at Austria having declared war, and angry at England having instigated her to do so, but Mr. Bathurst was very small game indeed on which to wreak his anger; moreover, the peace that had been concluded with Austria gave great advantages to France. He can have had no personal dislike to Bathurst, for he never saw him. When Napoleon entered Vienna, Bathurst was with the Emperor Francis in Hungary, at Komorn.

Besides, how could such a stroke have been carried out? It was true that on the other side of the Elbe the French were in possession, but there was the river to cross and four miles of road

from Wittenberge to Perleberg. Emissaries of Napoleon, strangers, would have certainly been noticed either coming or returning. The fact that Mr. Bathurst feared such an attempt induced the captain in command at Perleberg to make inquiries in this direction, but nothing transpired. It was true that Mr. Bathurst passed under an assumed name, but Captain Klitzing and the civil authorities were not deceived; they were convinced from the first that he was a person of political importance, and indeed thought him a functionary of much more importance than he really was.

And, lastly, Napoleon's solemn assurance that he knew nothing about the matter is deserving of respect, though the family never seems to have given it credence.

In 1815 Earl Bathurst was Secretary of State for War and the Colonial Department. May we not suspect that there was some mingling of personal exultation along with political satisfaction, in being able to send to St. Helena the man who had not only been the scourge of Europe, and the terror of kings, but who, as he supposed—quite erroneously we believe—had inflicted on his own family an agony of suspense and doubt that was never to be wholly removed?

MICHEL BARON.

'DU THÉÂTRE FRANÇAIS L'HONNEUR ET LA MERVEILLE.'

IN the year of grace 1663 a new star flashed into the theatrical firmament of France. An unknown actor made his first appearance at the Palais Royal, and critics waxed enthusiastic in his praise. 'Nature,' writes one, 'exhausted herself in producing such a prodigy,' and the welcome he received from the press was echoed by the public far and wide till we find the theatre filled to overflowing, and Molière himself carried thither from a sick-bed.

And all for what? To do honour to a finished artist, to a great tragedian? Nothing of the sort. It was simply to see a tiny ten-years boy play the part of the hero in a children's company which had just arrived from the provinces.

Many years afterwards that little lad, when speaking of his début, expressed pretty accurately the extravagant delight with which he was welcomed when he boasted that 'every thousand years a Cæsar was born, but that it took ten thousand to produce a Baron!' Great ladies swore by the pretty rosy lips, and vowed him a Cupid with clipped wings; actresses, not so great, but with even more power, vied with each other in fêting the young hero of the day; and Molière moved heaven and earth to get him transferred to his own company. In short, Michel Baron became the fashion, and so far disproved the assertion that a series of ups and downs is inseparable from an actor's lot, that from that memorable day when he first took Paris by storm to his final farewell to the stage, sixty-six years afterwards, his career was one long series of triumphs.

Literally born in the theatre, Michel Baron inherited to the full the beauty of feature and charm of manner which even more than her talent had made his mother so justly celebrated when on the stage. At the time when he fell into Molière's hands he was a beautiful fair-haired boy—'bel comme un amour!' writes Du Parc—with a great capacity for study, and with such a natural aptitude for everything dramatic that when, at Molière's instance, the boy's indentures with the travelling company were roughly cancelled by order of the King, his absence was bemoaned as an

irreparable loss. The head of the troupe, a certain Madame Raisin, did more than bemoan it. She forced her way into Molière's room, and, presenting a pistol at his head, threatened to shoot him if the little actor were not given back to her. Finally, peace was restored by the promise that he should act with his old companions for one more week, the ample receipts of which were regarded as full indemnity for Molière's rather high-handed proceeding.

In theatrical matters Parisians are rarely fickle. When an actor has once established his position as favourite, so long as he keeps himself well before the public, he is pretty sure to maintain his popularity. Paris, having once taken up the boy-actor, was determined that his subsequent success should verify her sagacity, and Baron was never announced to appear without obtaining a generous and sympathetic audience, who marked their appreciation of his efforts and spurred him on by kindly criticism. Molière for his part did all that love could suggest or care carry out for the advancement of his protégé. He not only took him into his own household, but he insisted that the boy should be treated in all respects as his own son. His education was entrusted to competent hands, and a certain little court-suit which greatly charmed its young wearer has been made by M. Grimarest into an affair of theatrical history. The same writer gives us many a pleasant peep at this oddly assorted couple; the jaded man of the world who wearied of his life in the zenith of his fame, and the little blue-eyed child who was confidently awaiting the future. From the first moment of his triumphant début at the Palais Royal, Baron always looked upon himself as a made actor; and there can be no doubt that this self-confidence contributed largely to his success. In October 1655 his father had met with his death through a stage accident. He had been playing Don Diego in Corneille's 'Cid,' and in the scene where he quarrels with the Count had injured his foot by kicking away a sword that had dropped upon the ground. Gangrene set in, and amputation was considered necessary, but Baron refused to listen to his doctor's advice. 'Who ever heard of the King of the Theatre wearing a wooden leg?' he asked them; and, as he remained deaf to their prayers, he died. Baron fils, who was only two years old when this happened, was afterwards exceedingly proud of his father's decision.

'I have read ancient and modern histories,' he boldly asserts, 'and I find a crowd of heroes and great men of every sort and kind,

except indeed actors. But of actors, grand actors, there have been only two—Roscius and myself.’ In spite of all this bombast and conceit, he was sincerely attached to Molière, and so far from taking advantage of his kindness, invariably replied to his constant inquiry as to what next he could do for his young favourite by the words, ‘Keep me always with you that I may prove my gratitude.’ To do this Molière would have been only too content, but unfortunately for both master and pupil there was a Madame Molière. She was a jealous-natured woman, and perhaps had some grounds for the fear that her husband cared more for little Baron than for his own baby-son. *Ce que femme veut, Dieu veut*, and Master Michel soon found himself *de trop* in the house. Exasperated beyond measure at what he considered unjust treatment, he ran away from home and joined a travelling company. It was in vain that Molière implored him to return. His thirteen-years-old dignity had been wounded by the fact that he had been struck by a woman, and as, in spite of her husband’s entreaties, the latter naturally refused to apologise, off went Baron to the provinces, where he was welcomed as a veritable ‘don du ciel.’

After four years of erratic wanderings he returned to Paris, and was received by Molière with open arms. The fame of his tour had preceded him to the capital, and the theatre-going portion of the Paris world overwhelmed him with cordial greetings. People recalled Du Parc’s words of seven years before—‘bel comme un amour’—and besought the powers that were that this spoiled child of fortune should make his second début in the rôle of ‘Love’ itself in the new ballet of ‘Psyche.’ His reception was brilliant, and Racine only echoed the feeling of the general body of the critics when he paid him the highest compliment perhaps playwright ever made to actor. His ‘Andromaque,’ which first saw the light in 1667, was being reproduced, and Racine personally superintended the rehearsals. One actor was unintelligible, another not sufficiently brisk, a third drawled his lines, and so on until each stood convicted of some fault. Then, having annihilated the rest of the company and thus pointed his words the more, the great author turned to young Baron with a low bow. ‘As for you, monsieur,’ said he, ‘I have no instructions to give. Your own heart will teach you more than my lessons.’

One is not seventeen, a Parisian, and a handsome fellow to boot for nothing, and his various love-adventures at this time are more exciting and romantic than they are reproducible. A good

deal toned down they form the basis of his best-known comedy, 'L'Homme à Bonne Fortune,' which was brought out in 1686, and in which Baron himself played the title-rôle. This play is in five acts, and a brief summary of it may not be out of place, insomuch that, although Baron wrote eight pieces in all, they bear such a strong family likeness one to the other, that in criticising one we criticise them all. Baron knew but one side of women—their frailties; but the age in which he lived, his handsome face, and his popularity, all combined to educate him to such perfection in his one-sided knowledge, that the *roués* of Louis' Court hailed him as complete a master in the art of play-writing as he was of acting. Moreover, the comedy is written in so brilliant and lively a vein that there is little wonder than even the more soberly disposed amongst his audience found the draught so intoxicating, that they forgave the nasty taste it left in the mouth. But once having praised the dialogue all commendation must end. 'The little great, the infinite small thing that ruled the hour' finds no clearer embodiment than in this (to us) most wearisome of fashionable plays. Indeed the production of 'L'Homme à Bonne Fortune' is chiefly memorable for the wordy war anent naturalness to which it gave rise. Baron defended himself on the score that there was not an incident in his comedy that was not an everyday affair in real life. Immorality might be there, he did not gainsay it; it was his business to amuse and not to instruct his audience (and in those days, be it remembered, the audience was the outcome of a Bourbon Court, and the typical young lady of fifteen was as yet an unevolved nightmare), but, immoral or not, his comedy was above all natural. That was his strong point, and on it he took his stand. And then the pent-up fury of the critics burst. 'If the word "naturalness" were to become interchangeable with the word "artistic,"' contended they, 'the theatre would not only be made the scene of every disgusting and revolting episode that might catch the fancy of a vicious public, but every species of boredom would be defended on the self-same ground.' The Sydney Grundy of the period—a certain Théophraste François, whose clever, biting pen cared little for its subject so long as its end were annihilation—rushed headlong into this famous 'Battle of the Pens.' 'Why not stretch M. Baron's theory to its fullest extent,' he proposes boldly, 'and have a drunken man upon the stage? His hiccoughings, vomitings, and noisy slumber would be exceedingly natural. If they

also prove artistic, our opponents have won the battle. If not, victory remains to us.' He then proceeds to explain his objections to the new plays. 'Nothing is more natural,' he complains, 'than that a dandy should spend a couple of hours in beautifying, receive letters and answer them; spend one hour at his mirror and the next on a lounge. Put such a character into a play; stretch the one act into two, the second to a third, and the longer it lasts the more natural it will be. But it is not artistic, and neither are M. Baron's plays.'

It was all in vain, however, that the critics protested against the extreme littleness of his plays. Besides the reasons already assigned for the tide of public opinion setting in their favour, there is still another that must be considered. Michel Baron was a splendid mimic, and, as chance would have it, it was at this time that he formed those friendships with ladies of high degree to which in his more humble-minded moments he ascribed his success as a playwright. His comedies are but a string of the veriest trivialities, it is true, but when, after passing the day in their company, his late hosts saw themselves—or what was a good deal more amusing, saw each other—imitated to the life while Baron was on the stage, it is not astonishing that they enjoyed the entertainment.

But we are anticipating. Molière died in '73, and then, being thrown on his own resources, Baron joined the company at the Hôtel du Bourgogne, whither success followed him. He seems to have been a decidedly imperious man, and though he lawfully had no right to interfere with his fellow-actors, he ruled them all with a rod of iron. He laid down a code of laws as regards gesture which still remains to us, and very strange they are—one of them being that the hand must never be raised above the level of the eye. In conclusion, however, he adds that feeling being above all rules, when carried away by passion, these last must be flung to the winds, by which wary remark it would seem that Baron had no intention of being bound by the same laws he laid down for other people. Another of his favourite dogmas was that the text of any given sentiment counted for nothing in comparison with action and gestures. In illustration of this he once recited to a crowded house the doggerel verse that Alceste speaks in the 'Misanthrope':

Si le roi m'avait donné
Paris, sa grand' ville, &c.

He spoke them in tones of deep sadness, broken by sobs; his eyes filled with tears, his whole attitude was one of dejection, and ere he had completed the first couplet (so writes a spectator) there was not a dry eye in the house. While acting as Cinna, in the lines—

. . . vous eussiez vu . . . par un effet contraire
Leur front pâlir d'horreur et rougir de colère—

he was seen to turn white and red in conformity with the verse. This sort of trick—for it is nothing more—finds no favour on our own stage. Cinna is simply relating a circumstance that took place, and would no more imitate the expression of men who were under a violent emotion than he would actually draw a picture when a few lines further on he says:—

Je leur fais des tableaux.

But, right or wrong, the power of so thoroughly identifying himself with the character greatly enhanced Baron's reputation, and apparently this literal suiting of the action to the word still finds favour with French actors; for but a very few years ago I saw the Miser, in 'L'Avare' (I cannot be sure, but I fancy it was M. Samson), when in the height of passion, pull himself up short at the words: 'Je suis mort! je suis enterré!' and cause a titter to run through the house by lying down flat on the ground.

This was a busy time in Baron's life. He wrote plays and verse, and acted incessantly until 1691, and then, in the height of his power, he suddenly left the stage. He bade farewell in the rôle of Ladislas, in Rotrou's tragedy of 'Venceslas,' at Fontainebleau, before royalty, and it is characteristic of the man that he nearly refused Louis' pension because he did not quite fancy the fashion in which the order was made out.

As a versifier Michel Baron is truly admirable. He translated a good deal of Horace, and wrote rhymed letters according to the fashion of the day; but his chief charm lies in a number of short poems, madrigals, sonnets, and the rest, all of which are addressed to 'Silvie.' As to whether this Silvie was one woman or many we have no guide. By all that we know of the poet, I am inclined to the belief that his *innamorata* of the moment took possession of her predecessor's title as well as her verses; but, be that as it may, the lines in themselves are many of them delicious, and many a young musician who complains of the poverty of our

own latter-day song-writers, might do worse than go to the old French poet-actor for inspiration. What, for instance, could be quainter or more delicate than his

RÉPONSE À SILVIE,

QUI M'ÉCRIVAIT QUE C'ÉTAIT AVEC SON CŒUR QUE JE RESPIRAIS

Si c'est votre cœur qui m'anime,
 Donnez-lui toute votre estime ;
 Il n'est occupé que de vous,
 Le mien ne me sert pas de même :
 Et contre lui je suis tellement en courroux,
 D'avoir si peu de soin de celui qui vous aime,
 Que loin de le redemander,
 Je jure qu'à jamais vous pouvez le garder ;
 Que vous ne devez point songer à me le rendre,
 Ce cœur que je ne puis et ne veux plus reprendre.

One is almost tempted, indeed, to turn away from the glare and glitter of his stage triumphs, and to linger amongst the little-read poems whose chiefest charm lies in the fact of their utter simplicity and absence of all artifice or trick. One more extract, and one only :—

À SILVIE.

Défiiez-vous, mon aimable Silvie,
 D'un amant toujours prêt à lire dans vos yeux,
 A vous plaire. Celui qui borne son envie
 N'est pas toujours celui qui fait aimer le mieux,
 Mais celui qui rempli de l'objet qu'il adore,
 Ne pense qu'à l'ardeur dont il se sent brûler,
 Embrassé, consumé du feu qui le dévore,
 Qui n'a presque jamais la force de parler,
 Qui ne fait que languir, soupirer ou se taire,
 Sur la foi des sermens qu'il n'ose s'assurer,
 Et qui passe les jours que l'autre a pour lui plaire
 Le plus souvent à se désespérer :
 Voilà celui, mon aimable Silvie,
 Que votre cœur doit préférer,
 Celui qui dans toute sa vie
 Ne trouve des momens que pour vous adorer.

Until 1720 he lived in retirement. He alleged certain pretexts of conscience as a reason for quitting the boards, but as at the time he was in treaty for a post about the Court, his own explanation may perhaps be doubted. As he did not obtain the coveted berth, he very likely would have returned to the stage but for the old King's interference. Louis, it appears, was rather tired of granting useless pensions, so when, on Baron's farewell in

1691, he made over the handsome sum of three thousand pounds to the retiring comedian, it was with the special proviso that, as he had chosen to say farewell to the public, he must abide by his own words. One wonders what the despotic old Bourbon would have thought of the perpetual 'last appearances' of our own present-day favourites.

Thirty years is a good slice out of a lifetime, but I cannot gain the slightest clue as to what he did with himself for that time. He neither acted nor wrote, nor did anything to keep himself before the public, and yet when his return to the stage (Louis XIV. being dead) was promised at the Palais Royal in Corneille's 'Cinna,' the theatre was crowded to welcome back the old actor. But, alas! Baron was now nearing seventy, and years of dissipation had changed the handsome face into a very caricature of its former self, while his voice—'that voice to which no woman could listen unmoved'—had become harsh and often indistinct. He had also adopted a peculiar pronunciation which consisted in elongating the final syllable of certain words, which was largely copied by younger actors. It is curious to note that of late years Sarah Bernhardt has also adopted a similar fashion of speech, by which it would seem that these 'cooing' tones, as they are called, go far towards concealing any strain or over-exertion from which the voice may have suffered.

He went through a terrible experience at the theatre soon after his return. He was playing Roderigo in the 'Cid,' and when he came to the lines—

*Je suis jeune, il est vrai, mais aux âmes bien nées
La valeur n'attend pas le nombre des années,*

their utter unsuitability tickled the fancy of the audience, who broke into a general laugh. Baron stopped short. It was the first time such a sound had ever reached him, and after a moment of silence he began the speech again. All to no purpose. At the fatal words a laugh was again audible, and Baron strode to the footlights, addressing the audience in a strong, clear voice, and with flashing eyes.

'Listen!' cried he, 'I will commence for a third time, but I warn you that if I hear another laugh I quit the stage and I do not return to it.' Once more he spoke the lines, and they were received in total silence.

'It was I who taught Paris to appreciate acting, and now she uses her knowledge against her teacher!' It was a sad enough

cry which this rebuff wrung from the lips of the old actor. He who had boasted of being more absolute king over the theatre than was Louis over France; he whom Corneille, Racine, and Voltaire had overwhelmed with their praise; he to receive this treatment at the hands of the pit! Too proud to follow his first impulse and quit the boards for ever, he vowed that Paris should acknowledge he retained all his former greatness, and in answer to his endeavours this verily came to pass. For nine more years he went on acting, and in that time achieved triumphs which rivalled those of his youth; and so varied was his répertoire that he even played Britannicus, who is drawn as a youth in his teens.

His final farewell was in the play of 'Cinna,' in September 1729, on the identical stage of the Palais Royal where in 1653 he had made his début. That, indeed, was a night long to be remembered in theatrical annals. Gaining seats by love was out of the question, for each was too anxious to be present to have much care about his neighbour; but bribery and corruption were freely used, and not only seats went up to an exorbitant amount, but unheard-of prices were paid for actual standing-room. The theatre must have been a grand sight that night, and for once the cant phrase of 'representative audience' must have been fully justified. Louis XV. was there in person with his beautiful Polish queen, the all-powerful Voltaire, then in the glory of early manhood, Racine the poet, and Fleury the statesman, and a brilliant, jewel-studded crowd of minor celebrities, one and all eager to do honour to their old favourite. To Baron himself the event must have been exquisitely painful. Molière, of course, had been dead for many a long day, but of the troupe he had formed (and many of them had been but struggling beginners when the boy-actor Baron had first come amongst them), not one of them was still living, though then they had numbered twenty-two in all. Corneille and Racine both were dead; Adrienne Lecouvreur, whose genius he had been amongst the first to recognise, was dying. Small wonder that the kindly audience seemed to him but a crowd of idle spectators, who knew nothing of his earlier triumphs, or that his final appeal to their sympathies should seem 'but the closing of his own coffin-lid.' The curtain went up and the play began, and in due time Baron as Cinna stepped upon the boards. Very, very few in all that crowded house could have been present when as a tiny child he had first crossed the stage, but the life of Molière's protégé was

a matter of history, and the thundering applause that greeted his entrance had the effect of totally unnerving him. He strove to speak, hesitated, stumbled through a few lines, and then stopped short. The actress who was playing Emilie struck in with her answering speech in hope of giving him time to recover himself, but before she had spoken many lines he fell helpless at her feet. Baron had always had a strong desire that he might actually die upon the stage, and it was at first believed that he had had his wish. This, however, was denied him. His illness proved to be a kind of fit, and though he was borne home in a dying condition, he lingered until the December following.

His death was bewailed as a national calamity, and the 'Mercure de France' reiterated his boyish boast by telling its readers that the one actor who bore comparison with Baron was the marvellous Roscius of ancient Rome. A week after his death this was contradicted; Baron, vowed the Parisians, stood alone and unrivalled. Unlike the ill-starred Lecouvreur, Michel Baron died in the odour of sanctity, and was buried in the parish church of S. Benoit; but his own highest eulogy was spoken at his compatriot's funeral oration. M. de Voltaire had known and loved both the dead artists, and after a touching speech in which he testified to the greatness of the actress, he went on to speak of the 'stage-king,' who had laid down his sovereignty but three short months before. 'He not only interpreted Nature, but he ennobled and beautified Nature by his interpretation.'

This was the verdict of the soundest critic of the day upon Michel Baron.

THE WHITE LADY OF THE HOHENZOLLERNS.

IN 1751 was published at Frankfort, 'cum licentia superiorum,' a very curious book entitled 'Æsopus epulans,' containing the discussions of a party of parsons about matters interesting to their order, and also some general matters. Quite naturally, several debates are on the question of tithes, how the various crops are to be estimated; other evenings are given up to the discussion of rank of precedence; others, again, to etiquette before persons of title, foreigners, and heretics. Their ailments also, and very naturally, interest these divines, and we are given recipes for the gout and lumbago, for fevers and chills. They also asked each other riddles—not very brilliant¹—and sang songs. All these went into the book. Among the songs is one on the woes of married men, another is 'Cantilena Parochi in Bavaria,' the troubles of a Bavarian parish priest. Then they raked together a set of epigrams, and composed others, more or less good. The divining rod puzzled them a good bit, and opinions were divided about it. Some of the parsons had had poachers come to them to confession, and they were hard put to say whether poaching were a mortal or a venial sin, so the point was mooted over their mugs of ale. These old fogies clubbed together once in the year for a thoroughly good dinner, with good wine. This caused scandal among the straitlaced of their congregations, and their superiors, archdeacons, and the bishops cautioned them not even harmlessly to offend weak souls. They accordingly talked this over. Some of them had been lugged into political discussions with their parishioners, and the old gentlemen considered whether a parson would not do best to hold aloof from all politics. Then the subject of ghosts was mooted, and we are given many pages of well-authenticated ghost stories. After ten evenings devoted to spectres, the subject of discussion turned off to whether women have a rib more than men; but as none of the venerable fathers were able to settle the question in the only practical and conclusive manner, on their next meeting they went back to

¹ They are on a level with and of much the same kind as; 'Where did Noah strike the first nail in the ark? A. On the head.'

ghosts, and lit on the famous apparition of the White Lady who is said to haunt the several branches of the Hohenzollern family. Erasmus Franciscus, in his 'Proteus,' is one of the first to give an account of the Hohenzollern White Lady, but Balbinus, the Bohemian historian, tells the story of the Rosenberg White Lady, who is allied to her, if not the identical spectre. The story, as given in the 'Proteus,' is as follows: 'On the genuineness of this ghost I have no doubt, because it has been seen repeatedly in several electoral and princely houses of the Roman Empire, both Calvinist and Lutheran, and also in the Bohemian family of the Barons of Rosenberg.

'In 1629, in the "Frühlings-Relation" of Berlin, is an account of the apparition of the White Lady in the electoral residential city of Berlin, with whose princely family that of Rosenberg is allied. It is said that, whenever any of the Electoral House is threatened with death, a spectre of a woman in a white mourning habit is seen, and in December 1628 was seen recently. Hitherto she had been silent. On this occasion she uttered the words, "Veni, judica vivos et mortuos!"

'It is also undeniable that in our times, only a few years ago, in a certain princely house allied to that of Brandenburg, a young prince met with a fatal accident, and that a few days before his death the White Lady was seen. The circumstances are related in the "Brandenburg Pinegrove" of the court preacher, John Wolffgang Reutsch, in these words:—

"On August 26, 1678, the Margrave Erdmann Phillip of Bayreuth was riding from the racecourse back to the palace, when his horse fell in the court a few paces from the steps, and threw the prince, who died a couple of hours later. Omens had appeared shortly before his death. The White Lady had been seen in the prince's armchair; his horse also had been as though frantic the whole week previous."

Count Pöllnitz in his letters mentions her. In a letter from Anspach, dated Sept. 29, 1729, he says, 'I think I ought not to omit acquainting you with a thing fondly believed here, and which my landlord of the house where I'm quartered assures me to be fact. It is accepted as such by every subject of the dominions of the House of Brandenburg. When any one of this family dies, whether prince or princess, a woman in white always appears just before the palace. I know not whether you ever heard anything concerning this propheticess of ill luck. Be that as it will, the

story which is told of her is this: Joachim II., Elector of Brandenburg, having a mind to enlarge his palace at Berlin, wanted to buy in several houses; but an old woman, the owner of one of these, refused to sell on any terms. The elector, finding her so obstinate, sent her the purchase-money and turned her out of it, upon which the old woman swore in a rage that she would be an eternal plague to Joachim and his posterity. They pretend that the good lady keeps her word, and that she haunts all the palaces of the Brandenburg family. My landlord added to these stories that the margravine would not die yet awhile because the woman in white had not appeared to anybody at court.'

As we shall see presently, Pöllnitz has not the story quite right.

The White Lady at Baireuth is said to have appeared to the French soldiers quartered in the palace in 1806; she disturbed them a good deal. In 1809 General d'Espagne was the principal sufferer. He arrived late, and was tired, and went to bed early. During the night a fearful cry from the general's room roused the staff; they rushed into his apartment, found the bed moved into the middle of the room, upset, and the general lying on the floor unconscious. He was drawn forth, bled, and when he came round he said that the White Lady had appeared to him, and approached his bed and tried to strangle him. In his efforts to escape the bed was upset. He described minutely the appearance of the spectre. Afterwards, when conducted by the Castellan Schluter through the portrait gallery, he became deadly pale and tottered as he came to one picture, pointed to it and said, 'That is she! Her apparition means my death.' His staff officers endeavoured to rouse him from his alarm, but he refused to sleep another night in the palace, and moved his quarters to the Villa Fantasie, outside Baireuth. Next morning the General sent a whole division of soldiers to the palace, and they tore up the floors and pulled down the panelling in search of secret passages and doors, but in vain. The General d'Espagne was not made more easy in mind by this. He left Baireuth soon after, and fell in the battle of Aspern on May 21 following. General Duroc told the whole story to Napoleon, and when the Emperor passed through Baireuth in 1812, on his way to Russia, he refused to occupy the suite of apartments got ready for him in the palace, and lay in another part of the town.

As already said, the White Lady is believed to haunt several palaces; in addition to those of Berlin and Baireuth she haunts

those of Anspach and Cleves, but these are all the residences of families akin to the Prussian imperial family. The Margraves of Baireuth derive through Christian, a son of the Elector John George of Brandenburg; the Margraves of Anspach through another son of the same. The heiress of Cleves married John Sigismund, Elector of Brandenburg, and Frederick William, the Great Elector, in 1666 took possession of Cleves by virtue of this inheritance. She is also said to be seen at Stuttgart, Darmstadt, and Vienna, but the claims of the Würtemberg, Hessian, and Austrian families to the attendance of the White Lady are not so thoroughly substantiated. Far better established is her connection with the house of Rosenberg in Bohemia, and, curiously enough, this house is also allied to that of Hohenzollern. In 1561 William of Rosenberg married the Margravine Sophia of Brandenburg, daughter of the Elector Joachim II.

Three distinct persons are said to be the originals of the White Lady, in addition to the old widow of whom Pöllnitz speaks. These three are Agnes Countess of Orlamünde, Bertha of Rosenberg, and the Princess Kunigund, who married, first, Ottocar II. of Bohemia, and, secondly, a Baron of Rosenberg. Agnes Countess of Orlamünde was of the ducal family of Meran.¹ She was married first to Count Otto of Orlamünde, and bore him two children. He died in 1293, when she fell madly in love with Albert Burgrave of Nürnberg, a Hohenzollern, who died 1361. Albert, who goes by the name of 'the Handsome,' was much younger than herself. When she made advances to him, he is said to have replied that four eyes stood in the way. He meant his parents. She understood that he referred to her children, whereupon she murdered them. Albert visited her in the Plessenburg, near Kulmbach, but when he discovered what she had done he shrank from her in horror, and afterwards married (1348) Sophia, daughter of Henry Count of Henneberg. Agnes of Orlamünde went on a pilgrimage to Rome to expiate her crime, and on her return founded the convent of Himmelskron, near Berneck, in Upper Franconia; there she was buried beside the children she had murdered, and there also Albert the Handsome was laid.

Unfortunately for the story, history does not substantiate it. It is quite true that the wife of Otto of Orlamünde was of Meran, but her name was Beatrix, not Agnes. Moreover, she could not be the mistress of Albert the Handsome, because she was his

¹ That is how she comes to haunt the Hapsburgs as well.

great-aunt, i.e. the sister of his grandmother according to one account, according to another the sister of his grandfather's first wife, he being descended from the second wife, Helena, daughter of Albert of Saxony. Be that as it may, she must have been a very old woman when Albert was a handsome blade. If the White Lady were Beatrix, she may have been Kunigund Landgravine of Leuchtenberg, who married Otto V. of Orlamünde, and this countess did give an endowment to Himmelskron in 1342, but did not found it. It had, in fact, been founded half a century before. She died without family. If there be any truth in the legend she must be the guilty woman, but history says nothing about the murder. Certainly, according to one version of the story, the White Lady is called Kunigund. There was a third Countess of Orlamünde living at the same time as Albert, but she was a widow with children who survived.

Tradition has long pointed out at Himmelskron the tombs of the countess and the children, with their figures sculptured on them. These have, however, been examined of late years. The figure of the countess turns out to be that of a youthful knight in the mantle of some order; his legs are encased in chain mail. The two heads on the second monument prove to be those of cherubs supporting a coat of arms. When this grave was opened in 1701, it was found to contain, not children's bones, but a gigantic jawbone, a leather shoe-sole, and the remains of a brown habit. The third tomb, which tradition asserts contains the body of Albert the Handsome, belongs to a much later date, and the arms on it belong to another noble race.

Bertha was the daughter of Ulrich von Rosenberg, head of the Catholic army levied against the Hussites, and Burgrave of Bohemia. Bertha was born between 1420 and 1430. She married John of Lichtenstein, a Styrian baron, who treated her with great barbarity. On his death she returned to Bohemia to her brother Henry of Rosenberg, and devoted her days to care for orphans. She always wore the then customary *white* mourning habit of a widow. She superintended the building of the castle of Neuhaus. Great structural difficulties attended the erection, but Bertha encouraged the workmen by her kind words and by the interest she took in the undertaking. When it was ended she gave a great feast to the masons, and founded a charity for the annual provision of a similar banquet.

In accordance with this tradition, the White Lady is repre-

sented as loving children, and to have been seen by mothers and nurses who have neglected their babes sitting by the cradle rocking and caressing the wailing infants. On one occasion a nurse came into the children's room, and, seeing a woman soothing the children, asked her sharply who she was and what right she had there. The White Lady replied, 'I am not a stranger in the castle like you; and these little ones are not yours, but my children's children.'

The third person who is said to walk as White Lady is Kunigund von Halicz, second wife of Ottocar II. of Bohemia; his first wife was Margaret, daughter of Leopold VI. of Austria. He was divorced from her in 1261, and married Kunigund immediately; by the latter he had a son, Wenceslas II., who succeeded him, and two daughters—Agnes, who married Rudolph II. of Austria, and Kunigund, who died an abbess at Prague. Ottocar died in 1267, and then she married the Baron of Rosenberg. She certainly did not murder her children.

We are therefore driven back on Kunigund of Orlamünde, and it is worthy of note that the earliest printed account of the White Lady calls her Kunigund, and not Agnes. She is said to have killed her children—a boy and a girl—by running a silver hairpin into their brains. The story forms the subject of a popular ballad.

The elder branch of the at one time powerful Orlamünde family were also Margraves of Meissen and Landgraves of Thuringia; it became extinct in 1095, whereupon the Orlamünde estates passed to Count Siegfried of Ballenstedt, a descendant of the Orlamünde race on the female side. In 1140 they fell to Albert the Bear, Duke of Saxony, whose descendants branched off. His son Hermann became Count of Orlamünde; the family died out in 1476.

It is not difficult to see that the two stories are quite distinct, and it is only the accident of an intermarriage between the Hohenzollern and Rosenberg families which brought the stories together and confused them. The real White Lady of the latter is most certainly the much-suffering, pious Bertha, and the White Lady of the former is the murderess Kunigund of Orlamünde, and not Agnes at all.

How the change of name came about is possibly due to Agnes of Austria, daughter of Albert I., who is known through the cruelties committed by or attributed to her after the murder of

her father. She was married to Andrew III. of Hungary, who died childless. Embittered by the death of her husband and the murder of her father, she is said to have ordered the butchery of all the families and connections of the murderers, to the number of a thousand, and after she had sat all day watching their sufferings to have said, 'Now I bathe in May dew.' Her part in this massacre has been denied, and indeed her innocence has been pretty well established by modern writers; but it was believed of her, and her name became notorious. As the Orlamünde countess was credited with as great hardness of heart, it is not impossible that on the tongue of the people the name of the more infamous queen may have been transferred to her. Both were widows, and both childless.

The name of the Rosenberg White Lady carries us at once to the real origin of the legend. Bertha is the mediæval form of Perchta, and Perchta¹ is the old Teutonic Goddess of the Moon, called also Hulda the Gentle, and Hörsel, whom the Christian Ripuarian Franks, changed to a virgin martyr, Ursula. This goddess was represented as the guardian of souls, and travels about with a train of children's spirits. These spirits are the stars over which the moon reigns.

Sometimes she lives in a mountain, and is represented as calling children to her. She has a great love for children, but when they hear her call and obey they die. So she is at once the lover of children and their murderess.

Then, again, she is the Goddess of Love, and she it was, living in the Venusberg, or Hörselberg, who lured the Tannhäuser into it, and held him enthralled in unlawful love for many years. Exactly so does the Countess of Orlamünde lure Albert the Handsome to the Plessenburg, and hold him there enthralled till he discovers her crime. The Albert story and the Tannhäuser story are based on the same myth, only in the former we have the children killed, which fails in the latter. Perchta is not only the Moon, but the Goddess of Nature, and she calls her children, the flowers of the field, to life and destroys them with the advent of winter. She is represented as a widow, weeping the absence of her lost husband, the Sun. Her silver hairpin, wherewith she slays her children, is the frost crystal, or icicle. Her day, Perchtentag, December 30, was kept as a feast, at which a special

¹ Perchta, or Bertha, signifies 'the Bright One.'

dish was always present. This feature of the myth comes to the surface in the story of Bertha of Rosenberg. Perchta always goes in white, wearing a long veil, and with keys at her waist; the same is the description given of both the Lady of Rosenberg and her of Orlamünde.

A curious children's game is played in various parts of Germany that has reference to Mother Holda or Bertha. A big girl sits in the middle of a ring, with the smallest children on her lap, who pretend to be asleep. Then one girl hobbles, as if lame, to the first child in the ring, and asks her if she be Mother Rose, or Mother Holle, or Mother Mary—the name varies. The child turns first one ear then the other to the questioner, and pretends to be deaf, but at last replies, 'Go a step higher.' So the circle is gone round, and the questioner finally comes to the girl in the middle, who, on being asked the same question, replies, 'I wake not, I sleep not, I dream not. What desire you?' The other asks to be given one of the angels on her lap. Mother Rose replies she would rather give all the kingdom of heaven. Then up jumps one of the sleeping babes and runs to the lame girl, who leads her to a thread stretched between two girls. If she can jump over this thrice without laughing the little child may join the outer ring; if not, she must go back to Rose's lap and be an angel again.

There can be no question as to the meaning of this. Rose (Hrodsa) is another name for Bertha—who is, be it remembered, of Rosenberg—that is, Perchta, with whom are children's souls. She sends the souls into the outer world, and the thread that has to be overleaped is the narrow line between the invisible and spiritual world and the world of matter. But I daresay our readers will say they have had enough of comparative mythology; let us return—not to our muttons—but to our Dames Blanches.

More or less apparently well authenticated cases of the apparition of the White Lady at Berlin have occurred in 1840, before the death of Frederick William III., and again in 1861, previous to the death of Frederick William IV. Whenever there occurs a death in the royal and imperial family, there is sure to be a statement in some of the German papers that the sentinels on guard in the palace at Berlin or at Potsdam saw the apparition, and were nearly frightened out of their wits, but these announcements are generally destitute of foundation.

The Vicomte d'Arlincourt, in his curious 'Pèlerin,' says, 'The Prince of Montfort (son of Jerome Napoleon, former King of

Westphalia) conducted me to the old castle of the Dukes of Würtemberg. A broad and not steep way, without steps, which can be ascended on horseback, even in carriages, leads to the upper story, consisting of galleries and halls, into which open the state apartments. "Here," said the young prince to me, "this is where the White Lady appeared."

"White Lady!" I repeated, "what White Lady?—that of Vienna?"

"No, she of Berlin, and she is not at all alarming."

"Oh! there is something of the kind, they say, in all the German courts."

"And the same belief in her. The likeness of the White Lady of Stuttgart is in one of the so-called imperial apartments. I do not believe in her a bit," continued the Prince of Montfort; "nevertheless there is a circumstance which has made a lively impression on me. My mother, a sister of the king (Katharine, daughter of Frederick I. of Würtemberg), lay ill at Lausanne, but, as the doctor said, not in any danger; consequently we were not at all anxious about her. One night—I was then living in this old castle in which we are—I heard a great sound as of something stirring. What was it? The White Lady had come along this gallery, passing the sentinels, who were frozen with terror, and knocked at my door. When the King of Würtemberg heard my story next morning he bade me be off as quick as I could for Switzerland. 'I fear for the life of my sister,' said he. I at once started, reached Lausanne, and received my mother's last sigh (she died November 28, 1835). Now I will tell you something more," Prince Jerome continued, "and you may believe what you like of it. One very dark night, when everyone was asleep in Stuttgart, a carriage with six horses rattled over the pavement, and drew up before the palace. The steps were let down in the sight of the sentinels, who looked down from the galleries; the White Lady stepped out. The gates did not open before her, yet she appeared within, passing through the doors as though they were nothing but a veil of fog. She paced with stately bearing along the great gallery. The sentinels did not dare to lay hands on her. What followed? Duke Ferdinand of Würtemberg, the king's uncle, died (January 20, 1834). At the time when my father was King of Westphalia," pursued the Prince of Montfort, "his minister at the court of Berlin wrote to him a letter, which I have kept as a curiosity. 'No news,' he said, 'at Berlin, except that

the palace is in commotion because the White Lady has been seen. However, I think nothing of that, as every member of the royal family is now in the enjoyment of rude health.' However, not long after, in came a despatch with different tidings. The beautiful Queen Louise of Prussia was dead" (July 19, 1810. She did not die at Berlin; she fell ill suddenly on a visit to her father, Duke Charles of Mecklenburg, at his villa at Zieritz).

'That was the end of the Prince of Montfort's tale; later, I heard the following. Katherine, the wife of King William of Württemberg, a sister of the Emperor Nicolas, was ill in bed. The door of her room flew open, as if driven open by a blast of wind. "Shut my door!" said the queen. Her companion, who was reading to her, stood up to obey. When she had shut the door and turned to go back to her place, she saw the White Lady in her seat. Two days later the queen was dead (January 9, 1819).'

The Vicomte d'Arlincourt tells us further that he visited the Archduchess Marie Louise, the widow of Napoleon, and from her lips heard that the White Lady never fails to appear in the imperial palace of Vienna before the death of one of the House of Austria. She told him: 'My grandmother was Queen of the Sicilies, and after the death of my father's first wife (Elizabeth Wilhelmina, daughter of Duke Frederick Eugene of Württemberg, died February 18, 1790), he asked for the hand of her daughter (Maria Theresa, daughter of Ferdinand I. of Sicily). My grandmother, anxious about her daughter's welfare, consulted a pious nun, to whom it was allowed at times to see through the veil of the future. Her answer was as follows: "Your daughter will be happy; but after she has passed her thirty-fifth year God will call her to Himself." This was clear enough. The new empress ascended the throne (she was married in 1790 at the age of eighteen) in the expectation of having a short but happy life. She often spoke to her young children about it, but never complained that the term was short. Thirty-five years! She had a long time yet. Alas! time flies very fast. The nearer the ominous term drew, the more did the empress endeavour to banish the thought of it from her mind. She ceased to speak of it. In the year that preceded her death, a heavy sickness brought her into great peril. "Be at ease," said her majesty to those who surrounded her, "my hour is not yet come. If heaven calls me, it will be next year."

'Her five-and-thirtieth year arrived. One day my sister, the

late Empress of Brazil, exclaimed in terror to her mother, "Behind your elbow-chair, I see—I see——"

"What, child? Speak!"

"The White Lady."

"She has not come for you, my dear," answered the empress calmly, "but for me. My hour has now come."

'Next day she was dead (August 13, 1807).'

The story is also told of the Archduke Rudolf, Prince Bishop of Ollmütz, who died on July 23, 1831, that he was dangerously ill in the palace at Vienna; the physicians, however, had not the slightest apprehensions. An official in the night saw the White Lady; he ran towards her, thinking to stay her, and hardly suspecting her to be a ghost, when he fell as though struck with sudden terror, and when he was picked up he was unconscious. Next morning the Archduke Rudolf was dead.

His brother, the Archduke Anthony, who died April 2, 1835, was dangerously ill, and had received the last sacraments. Then he asked, 'Who is that white woman yonder on her knees?' He had seen the White Lady. He died immediately after.

These are the only cases we know of the White Lady appearing in the Hapsburg family. The appearances in that of Hohenzollern that have been recorded are more numerous, and ancient as well as recent. She appeared before the death of the Elector John George, in 1598; also before that of John Sigismund, in 1619; in 1678 she was seen, as we have already related, before the fatal accident at Baireuth to Erdmann Phillip; also in Berlin in 1628, when she was heard to exclaim, 'Come and judge the living and the dead!' In 1659 she was met in the gallery at Berlin, before the death of Anna Sophia Duchess of Brunswick, sister of George William Elector of Brandenburg; again in 1667, when she foretold the death of Louise Henriette, wife of the Elector Frederick William. Again, she was seen by the court chaplain Brunsenius in 1688, before the decease of the Great Elector. Some later appearances we have mentioned. Whether she showed the recent death of the Red Prince we have not heard.

In 1859 a certain D. Hornung, in Berlin, took on him to communicate with the White Lady by a medium. He published a full account of the revelations thus obtained, which, of course, are disproved by history. He or his medium asserted that the spirit was that of Agnes of Orlamünde, and not Kunigund. We know better.

IN THE SPRING.

HAVE all the songs been said?
Are all the singers dead?
Is all the music fled?—

The sum and aim of life
One dreary struggle, rife
With greed and sordid strife?—

Man but a dull machine,
Living a vast routine
Of narrow purpose mean?

Oh! while one leaf swings high
Against an azure sky
In spring-time's ecstasy,

There breathes yet the sublime,
There beats yet living rhyme,
'Tis still the young world's prime.

Nature has high commands,
Bears gifts with lavish hands
To him who understands!

JESS.

BY H. RIDER HAGGARD,

AUTHOR OF 'KING SOLOMON'S MINES' ETC.

CHAPTER XXX.

'WE MUST PART, JOHN.'

JESS and her companion stood in awed silence and gazed at the blackening and distorted corpses of the thunder-blasted Boers. Then they went past them to the tree which grew some ten paces or more on the other side of the place of destruction. There was some little difficulty in getting the horses past the corpses, but at last they came with a wheel and a snort of suspicion, and were tied up to the tree by John. Meanwhile Jess took some of the hard-boiled eggs out of the basket and vanished, remarking that she was going to take her clothes off and dry them in the sun while she ate her breakfast, and that she advised him to do the same. Accordingly, as soon as she was well out of sight behind the shelter of the rocks, she proceeded to get out of her sodden garments, in itself a task of no little difficulty. Then she wrung them out and spread them one by one on the flat water-washed stones around, which were by now thoroughly warmed with the sun. Next she went down a few paces to a pool under the shadow of the bank, in the rock-bed of the river, and bathed her bruises and washed the sand and mud from her hair and feet. After this she came and sat herself on a slab of flat stone out of the glare of the sun, and ate her breakfast of hard-boiled eggs, reflecting meanwhile on the position in which she found herself. For her heart was very sore and heavy, and she could find it in her to wish that she was lying somewhere beneath those rushing waters. She had calculated on death and now she was not dead, and she and her shame and her trouble might yet live for many a year. She was like one who in her sleep had seemed to soar on angel's wings out into the airy depths, and then awakened with a start to find that she had tumbled from her bed. All the heroic scale, all the more than earthly depth of passion, all the spiritualised desires that had sprung into being

beneath the shadow of the approaching end, had come down to the common level of an undesirable attachment, along which she must now drag her weary feet. Nor was that all. She had been false to Bessie, and more, she had broken Bessie's lover's troth. She had tempted him and he had fallen, and now he was as bad as she. Death would have justified all this; she would never have done it had she thought she was going to live; but now death had cheated her, as he has a way of doing with people to whom his presence is more or less desirable, and left her to cope with the spirit she had invoked when his sword was quivering over her.

What would be the end of it supposing that they escaped? What could be the end except misery? It should go no further, far as it had gone, that she swore; no, not if it broke her heart and his too. The conditions were altered again, and the memory of those dreadful and wonderful hours when they two swung upon the raging river and exchanged their undying troth with the grave for their altar, must be a memory and nothing more. It had risen on their lives like some beautiful yet terrible dream-image of celestial joy, and now like a dream it must vanish. And yet it was no dream, except in so far as all her life was a dream and a vision, a riddle of which glimpses of the answer came as rarely as gleams of sunshine on a rainy day. Alas! it was no dream; it was a portion of the living, breathing past, that having once been is immortal in its every part and moment, incarnating as it does the very spirit of immortality, an utter incapacity to change. As the act was, as the word had been spoken, so would act and word be for ever and for ever. And now this undying thing must be caged and cast about with the semblance of death and clouded over with the shadow of an unreal forgetfulness. Oh, it was bitter, very bitter! What would it be now to go away, right away from him and know him married to her own sister, the other woman with a prior right? What would it be to think of Bessie's sweetness slowly creeping into her empty place and filling it, of Bessie's gentle constant love covering up the recollection of their wilder passion, pervading it and covering it up as the twilight slowly pervades and covers up the day, till at last perhaps it was all blotted out and forgotten in the night of forgetfulness?

And yet it must be so, she was determined that it should be so. Ah, that she had died then with his kiss upon her lips! Why had he not let her die? And the poor girl shook her damp hair over her

face and sobbed in the bitterness of her heart, as Eve might have sobbed when Adam reproached her.

But, naked or dressed, sobbing will not mend matters in this sad world of ours, a fact that Jess had the sense to realise; so she presently wiped her eyes with her hair, having nothing else handy to wipe them with, and set to work to get into her partially dried garments again, a process calculated to irritate the most fortunate and happy-minded woman in the whole wide world. Certainly in her present frame of mind those damp, bullet-torn clothes drove Jess nearly wild, so much so that had she been a man she would probably have sworn—a consolation that her sex denied her. Fortunately she had a travelling comb in her pocket, with which she made shift to do her curling hair, if hair can be said to be done when one has not a hairpin or even a bit of string to fasten it up with.

Then, after a last and frightful struggle with her sodden boots, that seemed to take almost as much out of her as her roll at the bottom of the Vaal, she rose and walked back to the spot where she had left John an hour before. He was employed when she reached him in saddling up the second of the two greys, with the saddles and bridles that he had removed from the carcasses of the horses which the lightning had destroyed.

‘Hulloa, Jess, you look quite smart. Have you dried your clothes?’ he said. ‘I have after a fashion.’

‘Yes,’ she answered.

He looked at her. ‘Why, dearest, you have been crying. Come, things are black enough, but it is no use crying. At any rate, we have got off with our lives so far.’

‘John,’ said Jess sharply, ‘there must be no more of that. Things have changed. We were dead last night. Now we have come to life again. Besides,’ she added, with a ghost of a laugh, ‘perhaps you will see Bessie to-morrow. I should think we ought to have got to the end of our misfortunes.’

John’s face fell, as the recollection of the impossible and most tragic position in which they were placed, physically and morally, swept into his mind.

‘My dearest Jess,’ he said, ‘what is to be done?’

She stamped her foot, in the bitter anguish of her heart. ‘I told you,’ she said, ‘that there must be no more of that. What are you thinking about? From to-day we are dead to each other. I have done with you and you with me. It is your own fault:

you should have let me die. Oh, John, John,' she wailed out, 'why did you not let me die? Why did we not both die? We should have been happy now, or—asleep. We must part, John, we must part; and what shall I do without you? what *shall* I do?'

Her distress was very poignant and it affected him so much that for a moment he could not trust himself to answer her.

'Would it not be best to make a clean breast of it to Bessie?' he said at last. 'I should feel a blackguard for the rest of my life, but upon my word I have a mind to do it.'

'No, no,' she cried passionately, 'I will not have you do it! You shall swear to me that you will never breathe a word to Bessie. I will not have her happiness destroyed. We have sinned, we must suffer; not Bessie, who is innocent and only takes her right. I promised my dear mother to look after Bessie and protect her, and I will not be the one to betray her—never, never! You must marry her and I must go away. There is no other way out of it.'

John looked at her, not knowing what to say or do. A sharp pang of despair went through him as he watched the passionate pale face and the great eyes dim with tears. How was he to part from her? He put out his arms to take her in them, but she pushed him away almost fiercely.

'Have you no honour?' she cried. 'Is it not all hard enough to bear without your tempting me? I tell you it is all done with. Finish saddling that horse and let us start. The sooner we get off the sooner it will be over, unless the Boers catch us again and shoot us, which for my own part I devoutly hope they may. You must make up your mind to remember that I am nothing but your sister-in-law. If you will not remember it, then I shall ride away and leave you to go your way and I will go mine.'

John said no more. Her determination was as crushing as the cruel necessity that dictated it. What was more, his own reason and sense of honour approved of it, whatever his passion might prompt to the contrary. As he turned wearily to finish saddling the horses he almost regretted with Jess that they had not both been drowned and got it over.

Of course the only saddles that they had were those belonging to the dead Boers, which was very awkward for a lady. Luckily for herself, however, Jess could, from constant practice, ride almost as well as though she had been trained to the ring, and was even capable of balancing herself without a pommel on a man's saddle,

having often and often ridden round the farm in that way. So soon as the horses were ready she astonished John by clambering into the saddle of the older and steadier animal, placing her foot in the stirrup-strap and announcing that she was ready to start.

'You had better ride some other way,' said John. 'It isn't usual, I know, but you will tumble off so.'

'You shall see,' she said with a little laugh, putting the horse into a canter as she spoke. John followed her on the other horse, and noted with amazement that she sat as straight and steady on her slippery seat as though she were on a hunting-saddle, keeping herself from falling by an instinctive balancing of the body which was very curious to notice. When they got well on to the plain they halted to consider their route, and as they did so Jess pointed to the long lines of vultures descending to feast on their would-be murderers. If they went down the river it would lead them to Standerton, and there they would be safe if they could get into the town, which was garrisoned by English. But then, as they had gathered from the conversation of their escort, Standerton was closely invested by the Boers, and to try and pass through their lines was more than they dared to do. It was true that they still had the pass signed by the Boer general, but after what had occurred they were not unnaturally somewhat sceptical about the value of passes, and certainly unwilling to put their efficacy to the proof. So after due consideration they determined to avoid Standerton and ride in the opposite direction till they found a practicable ford of the Vaal. Fortunately, they both of them had a very fair idea of the lay of the land; and, in addition to this, John possessed a small compass fastened to his watch-chain, which would enable him to steer a pretty correct course across the veldt—a fact that would render them independent of the roads. On the roads they would run a momentary risk, if not a certainty, of detection. But on the wide veldt the chances were they would meet no living creature except the wild game. Should they come across houses they would be able to avoid them, and their male inhabitants would probably be far away from home on business connected with the war.

Accordingly they rode ten miles or more along the bank without seeing a soul, when they reached a space of bubbling, shallow water that looked fordable. Indeed, an investigation of the banks revealed the fact that a loaded waggon had passed the river at no distant date, perhaps a week before.

'That is good enough,' said John; 'we will try it.' And without further ado they plunged in.

In the centre of the stream the water was strong and deep, and for a few yards took the horses off their legs, but they struck out boldly till they got their footing again; and after that there was no more trouble. On the further side of the river John took counsel with his compass, and they steered a course straight for Mooifontein. At midday they offsaddled the horses for an hour by some water, and ate a small portion of their remaining food. Then they upsaddled and went on across the lonely, desolate veldt. No human being did they see all that long day. The wide country was only tenanted by great herds of thundering game that came rushing past like squadrons of cavalry, or here and there by coteries of vultures, hissing and fighting furiously over some dead buck. And so at last twilight came on and found them alone in the wilderness.

'Well, what is to be done now?' said John, pulling up his tired horse. 'It will be dark in half an hour.'

Jess slid from her saddle as she answered, 'Get off and go to sleep, I suppose.'

She was quite right; there was absolutely nothing else that they could do: so John set to work and hobbled the horses, tying them together for further security, for it would be a dreadful thing if they were to stray. By the time that this was done the twilight was gathering into night, and the two sat down to contemplate their surroundings with feelings akin to despair. So far as the eye could reach there was nothing to be seen but a vast stretch of lonely plain, across which the night wind blew in dreary gusts, making the green grass ripple like the sea. There was absolutely no shelter to be had, nor anything to break the monotony, unless it was a couple of ant-heaps about five paces apart. John sat down on one of the ant-heaps, and Jess took up her position on the other, and there they remained, like pelicans in the wilderness, watching the daylight fade out of the day.

'Don't you think that we had better sit together?' suggested John feebly. 'It would be warmer, you see.'

'No, I don't,' answered Jess snappishly. 'I am very comfortable as I am.'

Unfortunately, however, this was not the exact truth, for poor Jess's teeth were already chattering with cold. Soon, indeed, they found that the only way to keep their blood moving was,

weary as they were, to continually tramp up and down. After an hour and a half of this or so, the breeze dropped and the temperature got more suitable to their lightly clad, half-starved, and almost exhausted bodies. Then the moon came up, and the hyænas, or wolves, or some such animals, came up also and howled round them—though they could not see them. These hyænas proved more than Jess's nerves could stand, and she at last condescended to ask John to share her ant-heap; where they sat, shivering in each other's arms, throughout the live-long night. Indeed, had it not been for the warmth they gathered from each other, it is probable that they would have fared even worse than they did; for, though the days were hot, the nights were now beginning to get cold on the high veldt, especially when, as at present, the air had recently been chilled by the passage of a heavy tempest. Another drawback to their romantic situation was that they were positively soaked by the falling dew. There they sat, or rather cowered, for hour after hour without sleeping, for sleep was impossible, and almost without speaking; and yet, notwithstanding the misery of their circumstances, not altogether unhappy, since they were united in that misery. At last the eastern sky began to turn grey, and John rose and shook the dew from his hat and clothes, and limped off as well as his half-frozen limbs would allow to catch the horses, which were standing together some yards away, looking huge and ghostlike in the mist. By sunrise he had managed to saddle them up, and they started once more. This time, however, he had to lift Jess on to the saddle.

About eight o'clock they halted and ate their little remaining food, and then proceeded slowly enough, for the horses were almost as tired as they were, and it was necessary to husband them if they were to reach Mooifontein by dark. At midday they halted for an hour and a half, and then, feeling almost worn out, went on once more, reckoning that they could not be more than sixteen or seventeen miles from Mooifontein. It was about two hours after this that the catastrophe happened. The course they were following ran down the side of one land wave, then across a little swampy sluit, and up the opposite slope. They crossed the swampy ground, walked their horses up to the crest of the opposite rise, and found themselves face to face with a party of armed and mounted Boers.

CHAPTER XXXI.

JESS FINDS A FRIEND.

THE Boers swooped down on them with a shout, like a hawk on a sparrow. John pulled up his horse and drew his revolver.

'Don't, don't!' cried Jess; 'our only chance is to be civil;' whereon, thinking better of the matter, he replaced it, and wished the leading Boer good day.

'What are you doing here?' asked the Dutchman; whereon Jess explained that they had a pass—which John promptly produced—and were proceeding to Mooifontein.

'Ah, Om Crofts!' said the Boer as he took the pass, 'you are likely to meet a burying party there,' and at the time Jess did not understand what he meant. He eyed the pass suspiciously all over, and then asked how it came to be stained with water.

Jess, not daring to tell the truth, said that it had been dropped into a puddle. The Boer was about to return it, when suddenly his eye fell upon Jess's saddle.

'How is it that the girl is riding on a man's saddle?' he asked. 'Why, I know that saddle; let me look at the other side. Yes, there is a bullet-hole through the flap. That is Swart Dirk's saddle. How did you get it?'

'I bought it from him,' answered Jess without a moment's hesitation. 'I could get nothing to ride on.'

The Boer shook his head. 'There are plenty of saddles in Pretoria,' he said, 'and these are not the days when a man sells his saddle to an English girl. Ah! and that other is a Boer saddle too. No Englishman has a saddle-cloth like that. This pass is not sufficient,' he went on in a cold tone; 'it should have been countersigned by the local commandant. I must arrest you.'

Jess began to make further excuses, but he merely repeated, 'I must arrest you,' and gave some orders to the men with him.

'We are in for it again,' she said to John; 'and there is nothin' for it but to go.'

'I sha'n't mind so much if only they will give us some food,' said John philosophically. 'I am half-starved.'

'And I am half-dead,' said Jess with a dreary little laugh. 'I wish they would shoot us and have done with it.'

'Come, cheer up, Jess,' he answered; 'perhaps the luck is going to change.'

She shook her head with an air of one who expects the worst, and then some gay young spirits among the Boers came up and made things pleasant by an exhibition of their polished wit, which they chiefly exercised at the expense of poor Jess, whose appearance was, as may well be imagined, exceedingly wretched and forlorn; so much so that it would have moved the pity of most people. But these specimens of the golden youth of a simple pastoral folk found in it a rich mine of opportunities. They asked her if she would not like to ride straddle-legged, and if she had bought her dress from an old Hottentot who had done with it, and if she had been rolling about tipsy in the veldt to get all the mud on it; and generally availed themselves of this unparalleled occasion to be witty at the expense of an English lady in sore distress. Indeed, one gay young dog called Jacobus was proceeding from jokes linguistic to jokes practical. Perceiving that Jess only kept her seat on the man's saddle by the exercise of a curious faculty of balance, it occurred to him that it would be a fine thing to upset it and make her fall upon her face. Accordingly, with a sudden twist of the rein he brought his horse sharply against her wearied animal, nearly throwing it down; but she was too quick for him and saved herself by catching at the mane. Jess said nothing; indeed, she made no answer to her tormentors, and fortunately John understood very little of what they were saying. Presently, however, the young Boer made another attempt, putting out his hand to give her a sly push, and as it happened John saw it, and the sight of the indignity made the blood boil in his veins. Before he could reflect on what he was doing he was alongside of the man, and catching him by the throat, had hurled him backwards over his crupper, with all the force he could command. The man fell heavily upon his shoulders, and instantly there was a great hubbub. John drew his revolver, and the other Boers raised their rifles, and Jess thought that there was an end of it, and put her hand before her face, having first thanked John for avenging the insult with a swift flash of her beautiful eyes. And, indeed, in another second it would have been all over had not the elder man who had taken the pass interposed; the fact being that he had witnessed the proceedings that led to his follower's discomfiture, and, being a decent man at bottom, had disapproved of them.

'Leave them alone and put down those guns,' he shouted. 'It served Jacobus right; he was trying to push the girl from her horse. Almighty! it is not wonderful those English call us brute beasts when you boys do such things. Put down your guns, I say, and one of you help Jacobus up. He looks as sick as a buck with a bullet through it.'

Accordingly the row passed over, and the playful Jacobus—whom Jess noted with satisfaction *was* exceedingly sick and trembled in every limb—was with difficulty hoisted on to his horse, and proceeded on his journey with not a single bit of fun left in him.

A little while after this Jess pointed out a long low hill that lay upon the flat veldt, a dozen miles or so away, like a stone on a stretch of sand.

'Look,' she said, 'there is Mooifontein, at last!'

'We are not there yet,' remarked John sadly.

Another weary half-hour passed, and then they suddenly on passing over a crest saw Hans Coetzee's homestead lying down by the water in the hollow. So that was where they were being taken to.

Within an hundred yards of the house the Boers halted and consulted, except Jacobus, who went on, still looking very green. Finally the elder man came to them and addressed Jess, at the same time handing her back the pass.

'You can go on home,' he said. 'The Englishman must stay with us till we find out more about him.'

'He says that I can go. What shall I do?' asked Jess. 'I don't like leaving you with these men.'

'Do? why go, of course. I can look after myself; and if I can't, certainly you won't be able to help me. Perhaps you will be able to get some help at the farm. At any rate you must go.'

'Now, Englishman,' said the Boer.

'Good-bye, Jess,' said John. 'God bless you.'

'Good-bye, John,' she answered, looking him steadily in the eyes for a moment, and then turning away to hide the tears which would gather in her own.

And thus they parted.

She knew her way now even across the open veldt, for she dared not go by the road. There was, however, a bridle path that ran over the hill at the back of the house, and for this she shaped her course. It was five o'clock by now, and both she and

her horse were in a condition of great exhaustion, which was enhanced in her case by want of food and trouble of mind. But she was a strong woman and had a will like iron, and she held on where most women would have died. Jess meant to get to Mooifontein somehow, and she knew that she would get there. If she could only reach the place and get some help sent to her lover, she did not greatly care what happened to her afterwards. The pace of the horse she was riding got slower and slower. From the ambling canter into which at first she managed to occasionally force it, and which is the best pace to travel at in South Africa, it continually collapsed into a rough short trot, which was agony to her, riding as she was, and from that into a walk. Indeed, just before sunset, or a little after six o'clock, the walk became final. At last they reached the rising ground that stretched up the slope to the Mooifontein hill, and here the poor beast fell down utterly worn out. Jess slipped off and tried to drag it up, but failed. It had not a yard of go left in it. So she did what she could, pulling off the bridle and undoing the girth, so that the saddle would fall off if the horse ever managed to rise. Then she set to work to walk over the hill. The poor horse watched her go with melancholy eyes, knowing that it was being deserted. First it neighed, then with a desperate effort struggled to its feet and ran after her a hundred yards or so, only to fall down again at last. Jess turned and saw it, and, exhausted as she was, she positively ran to get away from the look in those big eyes. That night there was a cold rain, in which the horse perished, as 'poor' horses are apt to do.

It was nearly dark when Jess at length reached the top of the hill and looked down. She knew the spot well, and from it she could always see the light from the kitchen window of the house. To-night there was no light. Wondering what it could mean, and feeling a fresh chill of doubt creep round her heart, she scrambled on down the hill. When she was about half-way down a shower of sparks suddenly shot up into the air from the spot where the house should be, caused by the fall of a piece of wall into the smouldering embers beneath. Again Jess paused, wondering and aghast. What could have happened? Determined at all hazards to discover, she crept on very cautiously. Before she had gone another twenty yards, however, a hand was suddenly laid upon her arm. She turned quickly, too paralysed with fear to cry out, and as she did so a voice that was familiar to

her whispered, 'Missie Jess, Missie Jess, is it you?' into her ear. 'I am Jantjé.'

She gave a sigh of relief, and her heart, which had stood still, began to move again. Here was a friend at last.

'I heard you coming down the hill, though you came so softly,' he said; 'but I could not tell who it was, because you jumped from rock to rock and did not walk as usual. But I thought it was a woman with boots; I could not see because the light all falls dead against the hill, and the stars are not up. So I got to the left of your path—for the wind is blowing from the right—and waited till you had passed and *winded* you. Then I knew who you were for certain—either you or Missie Bessie; but Missie Bessie is shut up, so it could not be her.'

'Bessie shut up!' ejaculated Jess, not even pausing to marvel at the dog-like instinct that had enabled the Hottentot to identify her. 'What do you mean?'

'This way, Missie, come this way, and I will tell you,' and he led her to a fantastic pile of rocks in which it was his wild habit to sleep. Jess knew the place well, and had often peeped into, but never entered the Hottentot's kennel.

'Stop a bit, Missie. I will go and light a candle; I have some in there, and they can't see the light from outside,' and accordingly he vanished. In a few seconds he returned, and, taking her by the sleeve, led her along a winding passage between great boulders till they came to a beehole in the rocks, through which she could see the light shining. Going down on his hands and knees, Jantjé crept through, and Jess followed him. She found herself in a small apartment, about six feet square by eight high, principally formed by the accidental falling together of several big boulders, and roofed in by one great natural slab. The place, which was lighted by an end of candle stuck upon the floor, was very dirty, as was to be expected from a Hottentot's den, and in it were collected an enormous variety of odds and ends. As, discarding a three-legged stool that Jantjé offered her, Jess sank down upon a pile of skins in the corner, her eye fell upon a collection worthy of an old rag-and-bone shop. The sides of the chamber were festooned with every imaginable garment, from the white full-dress coat of an Austrian officer down to a shocking pair of corduroys Jantjé had 'lifted' from the dead body of a bushman, which he had discovered in his rambles. All these were in various stages of decay, and obviously the result of years of patient collecting.

In the corners again were sticks, kerries, and two assegais, a number of queer-shaped stones and bones, handles of broken table-knives, bits of the locks of guns, portions of an American clock, and various other articles which this human jackdaw had picked up and hidden away here. Altogether it was a strange place; and it vaguely occurred to Jess, as she sank back upon the dirty skins, that, had it not been for the old clothes and the wreck of the American clock, she would have seen a very fair example of the dwellings of primæval man.

'Stop before you begin,' she said. 'Have you anything to eat here? I am nearly starving.'

Jantjé grinned knowingly, and, grubbing in a heap of rubbish in the corner, fished out a gourd with a piece of flat sheet-iron which had once formed the back plate of a stove placed on the top. It contained 'maas' or curdled butter-milk, which a woman had brought him down that very morning from a neighbouring kraal, and was destined for Jantjé's own supper. Hungry as he was himself, for he had had no food all day, he gave it to Jess without a moment's hesitation, together with a wooden spoon, and, squatting on the rock before her, watched her eat it with guttural exclamations of satisfaction. Not knowing that she was robbing a hungry man, Jess ate the maas to the last spoonful, and was grateful to feel the sensation of gnawing sickness leave her.

'Now,' she said, 'tell me what you mean.'

Thereon Jantjé began at the beginning and related the events of the day so far as he was acquainted with them. When he came to where the old man was dragged, with kicks and blows and ignominy, from his own house, Jess's eyes flashed and she positively ground her teeth with indignation; and as for her feelings when she learnt that he was condemned to death, and to be shot at dawn on the morrow, they simply baffle description. Of the Bessie complication Jantjé was quite ignorant, and could only tell her that Frank Muller had an interview with her sister in the little plantation, and that after that she was shut up in the store-room, where she still was. But this was quite enough for Jess, who knew Muller's character better, perhaps, than anybody else, and was not by any means ignorant of his designs upon Bessie. A few moments' thought put the key of the matter into her hand. She saw now what was the reason of the granting of the pass, and of the determined and partially successful attempt at wholesale murder of which they had been the victims. She saw, too, why

her old uncle had been condemned to death—that was to be used as a lever with Bessie; the man was capable even of that. Yes, she saw it all as clear as daylight; and in her heart she swore, helpless as she seemed to be, that she would find a way to prevent it. But what way? what way? Ah, if only John were here! But he was not, so she must act without him if only she could see the way to action. She thought first of all of going down boldly and facing Muller, and denouncing him as a murderer before his men; but a moment's reflection showed that this was impracticable. For his own safety he would be obliged to stop her mouth somehow, and the best she could expect would be to be incarcerated and rendered quite powerless. If only she could manage to communicate with Bessie! At any rate it was absolutely necessary that she should know what was going on. She might as well be a hundred miles away as a hundred yards.

‘Jantjé,’ she said, ‘tell me where the Boers are.’

‘Some are in the waggon-house, Missie, some are on sentry, and the rest are down by the waggon they brought with them and outspanned behind the gums there. The cart is there, too, that came just before you did, with the clergyman in it.’

‘And where is Frank Muller?’

‘I don’t know, Missie; but he brought a round tent with him in the waggon, and it is pitched between the two big gums.’

‘Jantjé, I must go down there and find out what is going on, and you must come with me.’

‘You will be caught, Missie. There is a sentry at the back of the waggon-house, and two in front. But,’ he added, ‘perhaps we might get near. I will go out and look at the night.’

Presently he returned and said that a ‘small rain’ had come on, and the clouds covered up the stars so that it was very dark.

‘Well, let us go at once,’ said Jess.

‘Missie, you had better not go,’ answered the Hottentot. ‘You will get wet and the Boers will catch you. Better let me go. I can creep about like a snake, and if the Boers catch me it won’t matter.’

‘You must come too, but I am going. I must find out.’

Then the Hottentot shrugged his shoulders and yielded, and, having extinguished the candle, silently as ghosts they crept out into the night.

CHAPTER XXXII.

HE SHALL DIE.

THE night was still and very dark. A soft cold rain, such as one often gets in the Wakkerstroom and New Scotland districts of the Transvaal, and which more resembles a true north-country mist than anything else, was falling gently but persistently. This condition of affairs was as favourable as possible to their enterprise, and under cover of it the Hottentot and the white girl crept far down the hill to within twelve or fourteen paces of the back of the waggon-house. Then Jantjé, who was leading, suddenly put back his hand and checked her, and at that moment Jess caught the sound of a sentry's footsteps as he tramped leisurely up and down. For a couple of minutes or so they stopped thus, not knowing what to do, when suddenly a man came round the corner of the building holding a lantern in his hand. On seeing the lantern Jess's first impulse was to fly, but Jantjé by a motion made her understand that she was to stop still. The man with the lantern advanced towards the other man, holding the light above his head, and looking dim and gigantic in the mist and rain. Presently he turned his face, and Jess saw that it was Frank Muller himself. He stood thus for a moment waiting till the sentry was near to him.

'You can go to your supper,' he said. 'Come back in half an hour. I will be responsible for the prisoners till then.'

The man growled out an answer something about the rain, and then departed round the end of the building, followed by Muller.

'Now then, come on,' whispered Jantjé; 'there is a hole in the store-room wall, and you may be able to speak to Missie Bessie.'

Jess did not require a second invitation, but slipped up to the wall in five seconds. Passing her hand over the stonework she found the air-hole, which she remembered well, for they used to play bo-peep there as children, and was about to whisper through it, when suddenly the door at the other end opened, and Frank Muller entered, bearing the lantern in his hand. For a moment he stood on the threshold, opening the slide of the lantern in order to increase the light. His hat was off, and he had a cape of dark cloth thrown over his shoulders, which seemed to add to his

great breadth, and the thought flashed through the mind of Jess as she looked at him through the hole, with the light striking upon his face and form, and glinting down his golden beard, that he was the most magnificent specimen of humanity she had ever seen. In another instant he had turned the lantern round and revealed her dear sister Bessie to her gaze. Bessie was seated upon one of the half-empty sacks of mealies, apparently half asleep, for she opened her wide blue eyes and looked round apprehensively like one suddenly awakened. Her golden curls were in disorder and falling over her fair forehead, and her face was very pale and troubled, and marked beneath the eyes with deep blue lines. Catching sight of her visitor she rose hurriedly and retreated as far from him as the pile of sacks and potatoes would allow.

'What is it?' she said, in a low voice. 'I gave you my answer. Why do you come to torment me again?'

He placed the lantern upon an upright sack of mealies, and carefully balanced it before he answered. Jess could see that he was taking time to consider.

'Let us recapitulate,' he said at length, in his full rich voice. 'The position is this. I gave you this morning the choice between consenting to marrying me to-morrow, and seeing your old uncle and benefactor shot. Further, I assured you that if you would not consent to marry me your uncle should be shot, and that I would then make you mine, dispensing with the ceremony of marriage. Is that not so?'

Bessie made no answer, and he continued, his eyes fixed upon her face and thoughtfully stroking his beard.

'Silence gives consent. I will go on. Before a man can be shot according to law he must be tried and condemned according to law. Your uncle has been tried and has been condemned.'

'I heard it all, cruel murderer that you are,' said Bessie, lifting her head for the first time.

'So! I thought you would, through the crack. That is why I had you put into this place; it would not have looked well to bring you before the court,' and he took the light and examined the crevice. 'This place is badly built,' he went on in a careless tone; 'look, there is another space there at the back,' and he actually came up to it and held the lantern close to it so that the light from it shone through into Jess's eyes and nearly blinded her. She shut them quickly so that the gleam reflected

from them should not betray her, and then held her breath and remained as still as the dead. In another second he took away the light and replaced it on the mealie bag.

'So you say you saw it all. Well, it must have shown you that I was in earnest. The old man took it well, did he not? He is a brave man, and I respect him. I fancy that he will not move a muscle at the last. That comes of English blood, you see. It is the best in the world, and I am proud to have it in my veins.'

'Cannot you stop torturing me and say what you have to say?' asked Bessie.

'I had no wish to torture you, but if you like I will come to the point. It is this. Will you now consent to marry me to-morrow morning at sun up, or am I to be forced to carry the sentence on your old uncle into effect?'

'I will not. I will not. I hate you and defy you.'

Muller looked at her coldly, and then drew his pocket-book from his pocket and extracted from it the death-warrant and a pencil.

'Look, Bessie,' he said. 'This is your uncle's death-warrant. At present it is valueless and informal, for I have not yet signed, though, as you will see, I have been careful that everybody else should. If once I place my signature there it cannot be revoked, and the sentence must be carried into effect. If you persist in your refusal I will sign it before your eyes,' and he placed the paper on the book and took the pencil in his right hand.

'Oh, you cannot, you cannot be such a fiend,' wailed the wretched woman, wringing her hands.

'I assure you you are mistaken. I both can and will. I have gone too far to turn back for the sake of one old Englishman. Listen, Bessie. Your lover Niel is dead, that you know.'

Here Jess behind the wall felt inclined to cry out 'It is a lie!' but remembering the absolute necessity of silence, checked herself.

'And what is more,' went on Muller, 'your sister Jess is dead too; she died two days ago.'

'Jess dead! Jess dead! It is not true. How do you know that she is dead?'

'Never mind; I will tell you when we are married. She is dead, and except for your uncle you are alone in the world. If you persist in this he will soon be dead too, and his blood will be upon your head, for you will have murdered him.'

'And if I were to say yes, how would that help him?' she cried wildly. 'He is condemned by your court-martial—you would only deceive me and murder him after all.'

'On my honour, no. Before the marriage I will give this warrant to the pastor, and he shall burn it as soon as the service is said. But, Bessie, don't you see that these fools who tried your uncle are only like clay in my hands? I can bend them this way and that, and whatever the song I sing they will echo it. They do not wish to shoot your uncle, and will be glad, indeed, to get out of it. Your uncle shall go in safety to Natal, or stay here if he wills. His property shall be secured to him, and compensation paid for the burning of his house. I swear it before God.'

She looked up at him, and he could see that she was inclined to believe him.

'It is true, Bessie, it is true—I will rebuild the place myself, and if I can find the man who fired it he shall be shot. Come, listen to me, and be reasonable. The man you loved is dead, and no amount of sighing can bring him to your arms. I alone am left, I, who love you better than life, better than man ever loved a woman before. Look at me, am I not a proper man for any maid to wed, though I be half a Boer? And I have the brains, too, Bessie, the brains that shall make us both great. We were made for each other—I have known it for years, and slowly, slowly, I have worked my way to you till at last you are in my reach,' and he stretched out both his arms towards her.

'My darling,' he went on, in a soft half-dreamy voice, 'my love and my desire, yield, now—yield! Do not force this new crime upon me. I want to grow good for your sake, and have done with bloodshed. When you are my wife I believe that the evil will go out of me, and I shall grow good. Yield, and never shall woman have had such a husband as I will be to you. I will make your life soft and beautiful to you as women love life to be. You shall have everything that money can buy and power bring. Yield for your uncle's sake, and for the sake of the great love I bear you.'

As he spoke he was slowly drawing nearer Bessie, whose face wore a half-fascinated expression. As he came the wretched woman gathered herself together and put out her hand to repulse him. 'No, no,' she cried, 'I hate you—I cannot be false to him, living or dead. I shall kill myself—I know I shall.'

He made no answer, but simply came always nearer, till at last his strong arms closed round her shrinking form and drew

her to him as easily as though she were a babe. And then all at once she seemed to yield. That embrace was the outward sign of his cruel mastery, and she struggled no more, mentally or physically.

‘Will you marry me, darling—will you marry me?’ he whispered, with his lips so close to the golden curls that Jess, straining her ears outside, could only just catch the words—

‘Oh, I suppose so; but I shall die—it will kill me.’

He strained her to his heart and kissed her beautiful face again and again, and next moment Jess heard the footsteps of the returning sentry and saw him leave her. Jantjé, too, caught her by the hand and dragged her away from the wall, and in ten seconds more she was once more ascending the hill-side towards the Hottentot’s kennel. She had gone to find out how matters lay, and she had indeed found out. To attempt to portray the fury, the indignation, and the thirst to be avenged upon the fiend who had attempted to murder her and her lover, and had bought her dear sister’s honour at the price of her innocent old uncle’s life, would be impossible. All her weariness was forgotten; she was mad with what she had seen and heard, with the knowledge of what had been done and what was about to be done. She even forgot her passion in it, and swore that Muller should never marry Bessie while she lived to prevent it. Had she been a bad woman she might have seen herein an opportunity, for Bessie once married to Muller, John would be free to marry her, but the idea never even entered her mind. Whatever Jess’s errors may have been, she was a self-sacrificing, honourable woman, and would have died rather than take such an advantage. Presently they reached the shelter again and crept in.

‘Light a candle,’ said Jess.

Jantjé fumbled about and finally struck a match. The bit of candle they had been using, however, was nearly burnt out, so from the rubbish in the corner he produced a box full of ‘ends,’ some of them three or four inches long. Jess, in that queer sort of way in which trifles do strike us when the mind is undergoing a severe strain, instantly remembered that for years she had been unable to discover what became of the odd pieces of the candles used in the house. Now the mystery was explained.

‘Now go outside and leave me. I want to think.’

The Hottentot obeyed; and seated there upon the heap of skins, her forehead resting on her hand and her fingers run

through her silky hair, now wet with the rain, she began to review the position. It was evident to her that Frank Muller would be as good as his word. She knew him too well to doubt it for a moment. If Bessie did not marry him he would murder the old man, as he had tried to murder John and herself, only this time judicially, and then abduct her afterwards. Bessie was the only price that he was prepared to take in exchange for her uncle's life. But it was impossible to allow Bessie to be so sacrificed; the thought was horrible to her.

How, then, was it to be prevented? She thought again of going down and confronting Frank Muller, and openly accusing him of her attempted murder, only, however, to dismiss the idea. Who would believe her? and if they did believe what good would it do? She would only be imprisoned and kept out of harm's way, or possibly murdered without further ado. Then she thought of attempting to communicate with her uncle and Bessie, to tell them that John was, so far as she knew, alive, only to recognise the impossibility of doing so now that the sentry was back. Besides, what object could be served? The knowledge that John was alive might, it is true, nerve up Bessie to resist Muller, but then the sole result would be that the old man would be shot. Dismissing this from her mind she began to consider whether they could obtain assistance. Alas! it was impossible. The only people from whom she could hope for help would be the natives, and now that the Boers had triumphed over the English (for this much she had gathered from her captors and from Jantjé), it was very doubtful if they would dare to help her. Besides, at the best it would take twenty-four hours to collect a force, and that would be too late. The thing was hopeless. Nowhere could she see a ray of light.

'What,' she said aloud to herself, 'what is there in the world that will stop a man like Frank Muller?'

And then all of an instant the answer rose up in her brain as though through an inspiration—

'Death!'

Death, and death alone, would stop him. For a minute she kept the idea in her mind till she was familiarised with it, and then it was driven out by another that followed swiftly on its track. Frank Muller must die, and die before the morning light. By no other possible means could the Gordian knot be cut, and both Bessie and her old uncle saved. If he was dead he could

not marry Bessie, and if he died with the warrant unsigned their uncle could not be executed. That was the answer to the riddle, and a terrible one it was.

But after all it was just that he should die, for had he not murdered and attempted murder? Surely if ever a man deserved a swift and awful doom it was Frank Muller.

And so this apparently helpless girl, crouched upon the ground, a torn and bespattered fugitive in the miserable hiding-hole of a Hottentot, arraigned the powerful leader of men before the tribunal of her conscience, and without pity, if without wrath, passed upon him a sentence of extinction.

But who was to be the executioner? A dreadful thought flashed into her mind and made her heart stand still, but she dismissed it. She had not come to that yet. Her eyes wandered round the kennel and lit upon Jantjé's assegais and sticks in the corner, and then she got another inspiration. Jantjé should do the deed. John had told her one day—told her, when they were sitting together in the 'Palatial' at Pretoria—the whole of Jantjé's awful story about the massacre of his relatives by Frank Muller twenty years before, of which, indeed, she already knew something. It would be most fitting that this fiend should be removed off the face of the earth by the survivor of those unfortunates. There would be a little poetic justice about that, and it is so rare in the world. But the question was, would he do it? The little man was a wonderful coward, that she knew, and had a great terror of Boers, and especially of Frank Muller.

'Jantjé,' she whispered, putting her head towards the bee-hole.

'Yes, Missie,' answered a hoarse voice outside, and next second his monkey-like face came creeping into the ring of light, followed by his even more monkey-like form.

'Sit down there, Jantjé. I am lonely here and want to talk.'

He obeyed her, with a grin. 'What shall we talk about, Missie? Shall I tell you a story of the time when the beasts spoke to one another like I used to do years and years ago?'

'No, Jantjé. Tell me about that stick—that long stick with a knob on the top, and the nicks cut on it. Has it not something to do with Baas Frank Muller?'

The Hottentot's face instantly grew evil. 'Yah, yah, Missie!' he said, reaching out a skinny claw and seizing the stick. 'Look, that big notch that is my father, Baas Frank shot him; and that

next notch that is my mother, Baas Frank shot her; and the next one, that is my uncle, an old, old man, Baas Frank shot him too. And these small notches, they are when he has beaten me—yes, and other things too. And now I will make more notches, one for the house that is burnt, and one for the old Baas Croft, my own Baas, whom he is going to shoot, and one for Missie Bessie.' And without further ado he drew from his side a very large white-handled hunting-knife, and began to cut them then and there upon the hard wood of the stick.

Jess knew this knife of old. It was Jantjé's peculiar treasure, the chief joy of his narrow little heart. He had bought it from a Zulu for a heifer which her uncle had given him in lieu of half a year's wage. The Zulu had got it from a man who came down from beyond Delagoa Bay. As a matter of fact it was a Samali knife, manufactured from soft native steel (which takes an edge like a razor), and with a handle cut from the tusk of a hippopotamus. For the rest, it was about a foot long, with three grooves running the length of the blade, and very heavy.

'Stop cutting notches, Jantjé, and let me look at that knife.'

He obeyed, and put it into her hand.

'That knife would kill a man, Jantjé,' she said.

'Yes, yes,' he answered; 'no doubt it has killed many men.'

'It would kill Frank Muller, now, would it not?' she said, suddenly bending forward and fixing her dark eyes upon the little man's jaundiced orbs.

'Yah, yah,' he said, starting back, 'it would kill him dead. Ah! what a thing it would be to kill him,' he added, with a fierce sound—half sniggle, half laugh.

'He killed your father, Jantjé.'

'Yah, yah, he killed my father,' said Jantjé, his eyes beginning to roll with rage.

'He killed your mother.'

'Yah, he killed my mother,' he repeated after her, with eager ferocity.

'And your uncle. Baas Frank killed your uncle.'

'And my uncle, too,' he went on, shaking his fist and twitching his long toes as his voice rose to a sort of subdued scream. 'But he will die in blood—the old English woman, his mother, said it when the devil was in her, and the devils never lie. Look! I draw Baas Frank's circle in the dust with my toe, and listen, I say the words—I say the words,' and he muttered something

rapidly; 'an old, old witch doctor taught me how to do it, and what to say. Once before I did it, and there was a stone in the way, now there is no stone: look, the ends meet. He will die in blood; he will die soon. I know how to read the circle,' and he gnashed his teeth and sawed the air with his clenched fists.

'Yes, you are right, Jantjé,' she said, still holding him with her dark eyes. 'He will die in blood, and he shall die to-night, and *you* will kill him, Jantjé.'

The Hottentot started, and turned pale under his yellow skin.

'How,' he said; 'how?'

'Bend forward, Jantjé, and I will tell you how;' and she whispered for some minutes into his ear.

'Yes! yes! yes!' he said, when she had done. 'Oh, what a fine thing it is to be clever like the white people! I will kill him to-night, and then I can cut out the notches, and the ghosts of my father, and my mother, and my uncle will stop howling round me in the night as they do now, when I am asleep.'

(To be concluded.)

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